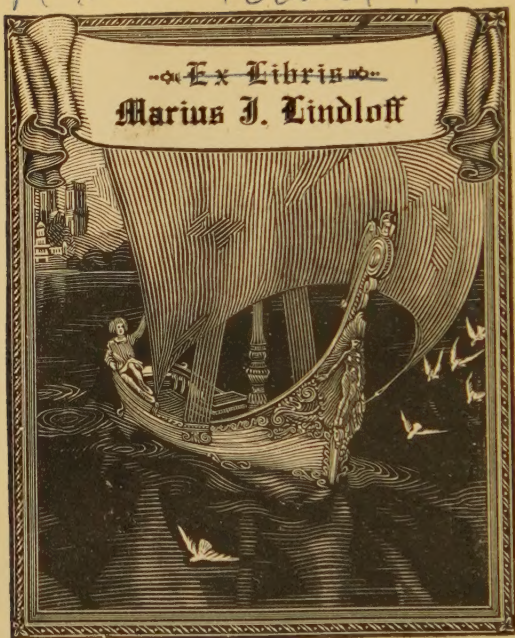


THE UNIVERSALITY OF JESUS

G. A. JOHNSTON ROSS

A decorative flourish consisting of a horizontal line with ornate scrollwork at both ends and three small circular motifs along the bottom curve.

R. W. Youngkin



THE UNIVERSALITY OF JESUS

The Universality of Jesus

REV. G. A. JOHNSTON ROSS, M. A.

S. Columba's Church, Cambridge, England.



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To
M. L. R.
*In Grateful and Astonished
Love.*

CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTORY	9
II.	THE UNIQUENESS OF HIS HUMANITY	13
III.	THE WITNESS OF HIS ENVIRONMENT	28
IV.	THE WITNESS OF HIS ORIGIN . . .	37
V.	THE WITNESS OF HIS BAPTISM . . .	48
VI.	THE WITNESS OF HIS TEMPTATION .	57
VII.	THE WITNESS OF HIS TRANSFIGURA- TION	68
VIII.	THE WITNESS OF HIS TEACHING .	76
IX.	THE WITNESS OF HIS PRAYERS .	87
X.	THE WITNESS OF HIS DEATH . . .	99
XI.	THE WITNESS OF HIS RESURRECTION	108
XII.	THE WITNESS OF PENTECOST . . .	117

The Universality of Jesus

I

INTRODUCTORY

"One man of a particular race and age cannot be the standard for all men, the judge of all men of all ages and races, the goal of human moral development unless he is something more than one man among many. Such a universal manhood challenges enquiry."—GORE.

I PROPOSE to set out upon an examination of the memoirs of Jesus, in the interest of a certain truth about Him—an aspect of His uniqueness—which it is important that in these days we should clearly see: the truth that in Him is presented to our view the Representative Man, in whom the Idea of the species is incarnated, in whose person "all that belongs to the perfection of every man" is included, and who will continue to draw men everywhere to Himself because He has realized in Himself the final type of Humanity, so that in Him "the separate individualities of men find a supreme unity."

The importance of this truth for the faith of the rising generation can scarcely be exaggerated. The pivot of a convincing apologetic must be the impression which Jesus makes upon us: and it is in the last degree important that

we should rightly realize what this impression is, even if it be difficult to gather it all within the fold of one idea.

Jesus stands in *some* unique relation to the human race. That relation has never yet been satisfactorily defined or expressed.¹ Perhaps it is in the nature of things that it can *never* be adequately, or at least succinctly, expressed. Nevertheless, endeavours must be made, and will continue to be made, to follow the courses of the various streams at whose confluence stands the impression which Christ has made on the minds of men.

But my object in this series of studies will be not so much to pursue an intellectual interest² as to try to serve a religious need.

Is not this generation wistfully subconscious of an increase of its *distance* from the historical Jesus?

Our modern methods of thought and the books we read conspire to set Him somehow back from us, to our largely-unconfessed bewil-

¹ "This relation (i. e., of Christ to the human race) has never yet been clearly apprehended either by the Christian Church as a whole or by any considerable section of it.—Dale, "The Atonement," p. 402. See Dorner, "System of Doctrine," III, 320.

² Although no question is more certain in the near future to occupy the minds of thoughtful men than the question of the place of Christ in the cosmic process, of which question that of His relation to the human race is only a part.

derment and dismay. People told us some years ago that our views of the gospel were inadequate, and the direction was shouted to us—"Back to Christ!" Well, we went back: and we found that they had prepared the scenery and the dresses and the manners and customs of His Palestinian environment, and they told us about the subjects of His teaching, and gave us a syllabus of His method and His views upon religious questions, and they said, "Thus and thus spake the Teacher of Galilee: in this and that group of sayings we unfold to you the mind of the Master."¹ It is all very beautiful and valuable: it is always educative to be made conscious of the spaces of history, and to be reminded of facts and truths which have been unduly subordinated. But, has there not been all the while at our hearts a chill, a loneliness?² Is not the deepest religious question, after all, for each man, this: whether there be in Christ a present Saviour, who can cover *me* now with the robe of His righteousness? No historic research, no exposi-

¹ Cf. T. G. Selby, "The Ministry of the Lord Jesus," pp. 106, 107.

² Dim tracts of time divide
Those golden days from me
Thy Voice comes strange o'er years of change
How can we follow Thee?

Comes faint and far Thy Voice
From vales of Galilee
The Vision fades in ancient shades
How should we follow Thee?

tion of the doctrines of an old-world Teacher removes the burden of the friendlessness of my sin-stained soul in a universe ruled by a holy God. If by your scholarship you so make to live again the classic scenes in which the Nazarene moved and taught that I am made painfully conscious of the long centuries that intervening divide Him from me: then all the more, if you would secure the abiding of my faith in Him, you must let me see how He can still reach *me*, and stand for *me*, the wings of His affluent personality outstretched to cover me.

Can this be done? Can it be shown that He is equipped and He alone, to be man's Representative still? Our fathers came to this truth from the side of His Divinity, and had much to say of His Federal Headship of the race: the intellectual habits of our time compel us to approach the truth from the side of His humanity, and by the study of the portrait left to us of Him.

I invite my readers to join with me in this study and quest, believing that the more carefully we gaze upon the portrait of Jesus given by the Evangelists, the more clearly shall we see in Him, not one man among many, imbedded in and bearing the impress of a limited environment, but the lonely figure of the One Universal Man, spacious, catholic, eternal, our norm and archetype.

II

THE UNIQUENESS OF HIS HUMANITY

"Christ is not a single Person. He is to those who know Him Collective Man, who is loved in the love of Him."—FAIRBAIRN.

"There has been but one Son of Man."—F. W. ROBERTSON.

EVERY one who has attentively read the four gospels has been impressed by the wealth of the material crowded into their narrow circumference. "After fifty years of study," said the late Bishop of Durham, "each fresh effort and difficulty lays open to me something that adds to the completeness of the apostolic record." As this feature of fullness is carefully considered, it is seen to be due to the rich comprehensiveness of the life and character of the central person—Jesus Christ: that the fullness indeed is *His*; that as one reads, one is in the presence of a person of extraordinary width of character, sympathy, intellect, interest, purpose, exhibiting a total of the highest excellence of faculty and disposition in perfect balance, development, symmetry: in all this *a new type of man*.

The thing is so novel that one has no name ready for the marvel. In medicine, the personal factor which differentiates each case from exact conformity to law is called "idiosyncrasy."

As one reads the gospels, one tries to think of the idiosyncrasy of Jesus, and one is startled to realize that *He had none*. If some one in our presence were to describe His character in terms of some specific quality or virtue, we should instinctively feel the inadequacy of the description. "No," we should say; "the Christ of whom I read in the gospels is neither specifically strong nor specifically tender: neither merciful to the exclusion of justice, nor severe without compassion: mild and gentle, He is yet equally courageous and noble. The features of no one special type of goodness monopolize His character; He seems to include and to bring to perfection in Himself every conceivable type of goodness, and to belong to all time, and to be at home in every age and place: the local, the temporary, the accidental fade out of sight as I look on Him, and there shine out the lineaments of the Universal and the Eternal."

Let us allow this thought to gather greater definiteness by looking upon it in detail.

If we think of *other* personages who are presented for our study, we find that in every case certain circumstances, personal or historical, limit of necessity the impression which is made by these personages on their fellow men.

1. Take to begin with, the circumstance of *sex*. Each of the two sexes into which humanity is divided possesses its own characteristic virtues and

ideals. We expect and are impressed by *strength* in men, and look with the uplifted eye of admiration on a strong man like Abraham Lincoln. We expect *tenderness* in women, and reverence the gentleness of a woman like the mother of our Lord.

Have we ever thought of the peculiar position occupied by Jesus with respect to the ideals of the sexes? No man has ever dared to call Jesus, in any opprobrious sense, sexless: yet in character He stands above, and, if one may use the term, midway between the sexes,—His comprehensive humanity a veritable storehouse of the ideals we associate with *both* the sexes. No woman has ever had any more difficulty than men have had in finding in Him the fulfillment of the ideal. "Whatever there is in men of strength, justice, and wisdom, whatever there is in woman of sensibility, purity and insight, is in Christ without the conditions which hinder among us the development of contrasted virtues in one person."¹

And that this is no mere play of fancy is shown by the facts of Christian history. It has happened in the Christian Church that one side of Christ's character has been over-emphasized to the neglect of the complementary facts upon the other side: the invariable result has been the undermining of His unique supremacy

¹ Westcott.

over the human heart, and the rise of pseudo-Christianity. Thus, when in the Middle Ages, and especially from the eleventh century, the "womanly" aspects of Christ's nature were subordinated or obscured, and His compassion and mercy forgotten in the presentation of His justice and awful severity—the inevitable result followed. Men's hearts recoiled and sought for the satisfaction of their yearnings after tenderness in Deity by clothing the mother of Jesus with the appealing qualities which were lacking in the priest-mediated Christ, and by robing her with a more gracious Divine majesty. And when afterwards "the reaction against this Christ of terror led to the effeminate, languorous, pietistic Christ of a later sentimentalism," "a Christ devoid not only of grandeur, but of common manliness," strong men rose and abandoned a religion whose Central Person could not answer and fulfill the aspirations of their masculine lives: and, indeed, in our own time the secession from the Church of many men of the most robust and virile type of manhood is largely to be traced to the defective portrait of Christ, which much of our modern evangelicalism has presented, and especially to the exaggeratedly feminine and saccharine quality of many of our hymns in honour of Christ.

In Christ, then, appear in perfect harmony the final type of manhood, and the final type of

womanhood. And as He stands on the gospel-page, so He stands on the page of history—the Mediator of sex. He has infused into the strength of manhood the gracious gentleness of womanhood, redeeming men from slavery to the ideal of masterful truculence; He has elevated and ennobled the ideal of the feminine life by showing that tenderness and loving kindness are not inconsistent with dignity and courage and moral force.¹ And over all, in the poise of the two ideals in His own so perfectly balanced character, Jesus of Nazareth stands out, eminent, alone.

2. Again, this “fullness” of the humanity of Jesus is illustrated by His relation to *racial temperament*. It is notorious that men are differentiated by the races to which they belong, limited and defined by their race’s characteristic temper. It is the merest commonplace of our thought and of our interpretation of past and current history that we look for and count upon the characteristic differences between Celt and Teuton, Aryan and Semite, Oriental and Western. Have we realized to the full the significance the impression which in this matter has been made upon men by Jesus? He came of a people than whom there is none more clearly marked off from other men by special features of endowment and temper, a people with whom

¹ See Martineau, “Hours of Thought,” I, 294, 295.

it has been patriotism and religion to keep themselves apart from other men, and who to this day, though they wander landless among all other nations, are distinct from all, absorbed in none. Yet Jesus was not a Jew. Before His great soul the walls of racial division fell down. Brought up in Nazareth, He stood at the confluence of three civilizations—Hebrew, Greek, Roman: yet He was merged in none, but stood above, apart. When Tissot painted his pictures of the life of Christ, he showed the subordinate figures in his groups in conformity with characteristic Roman or Semitic types. But he dared not Semitize the face of Jesus. "In Him there was neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free." He was, as He loved to call Himself, the *Son of Man*.

And again, as He is on the gospel-page, so is He on the page of history: Mediator of race. It was in and through Him that grew up the very conception of the unity of a common brotherhood of man, underlying all racial differences. It was because "the world was in His heart" that humanity became conscious of itself in Him; and to-day the hope and prospect of the abolition of race-hatred lie in the wider knowledge of Him who is related most closely to all men, divesting Himself with consummate ease of all that is local and national, entering into every nation and every heart as "coming

unto His own," the one true cosmopolitan, the ultimate symbol of the humanity that is to be.

3. Once more, as Jesus is free from the limitations in character and endowment which are imposed upon other men by the accidents of sex and of race, so also He is not less startlingly free from bondage to the *age in which He lived*. No other man has absolutely escaped from the influence of his environment, and of his time: Jesus is a root out of a dry ground, His surroundings unable either to explain or to confine Him. It is the rarest thing to see a man step out intellectually a little way in front of his time: Jesus' mind was not simply in advance of His time, it was detached from any special age, aloof from the trammels of every age. You cannot date the mind of Jesus. "In the culture of the past, Thou, Christ, art the only modern!" Yet the modern world can no more claim Him than the ancient: His colossal intellect spans all the centuries. It is not their originality, it is their correspondence with what must be everywhere and at all times and in all worlds true, that is the outstanding feature of the words of Jesus. "Heaven and earth," He calmly said—and one marks the curious credibility of the words—"shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." We find ourselves believing this, because, in point of fact, the words are as alive with spiritual appeal as ever they were:

they are the living contemporaries of every age. Christianity is domiciling itself in every quarter of the globe, and unfolding to each generation the true interpretation of that generation's life because the mind of its Founder was trammelled by no provincialisms, and His thoughts are eternal.

These things are patent on the gospel-page: can we conceive an age or generation in which the Beatitudes or the Parable of the Good Samaritan would not be profoundly true, and to which they would be unfitted to carry a spiritual appeal? And again, as He is on the gospel-page, so is He on the page of history: Mediator of the ages. The ancient and the modern worlds—the Eastern and the Western worlds—find their common bond, the coördination of their differing kinds of knowledge in Him: He is the Desire of all nations. When the Parliament of Religions came to the close of its meetings, it was in His words and His alone that all the delegates were able to join; for the Lord's Prayer is not simply the most ancient and venerable liturgical form in use in the Christian Church: it is the one flawless expression extant of the religious idea in universal man. It is true in the world of thought, as in the world of life, that all things are "summed up" in Christ.

4. We seek in vain for limitation in Jesus: we

cannot even locate Him *among the social ranks*. The son of a peasant woman, He was of the house and lineage of David : He consorted with the common people and the outcast, but He awed kings and great rulers by the majesty of His bearing. There was no rank of society which He did not understand and dominate, none that could appropriate or control Him. He washed the feet of His peasant companions ; but it was as their Lord and Master. He compelled a haughty Pharisee to be ashamed in the presence of a fallen woman, and rejected with more than regal scorn a king's attempt at patronage. A Royal Court was stricken with a tremour of fear when He was born—born the child of wayfarers in the stable of a country inn : when He died, poor women and learned and rich men joined in ministering at His burial. And once more as He is on the gospel-page, so is He on the page of history—Mediator of rank. For if in our or in any age there be any hope that the misunderstandings which exist between class and class, between rank and rank, shall be done away, that hope must lean back on Him, who alone has stood through all the ages, the unclassifiable Man, yet speaking to the heart of every class in a dialect which all could understand, obliterating all man-made differences by the directness of His appeals and the impartiality of His solicitude.

We need not labour these illustrations further.

Test Him by habits and by temperament, and everywhere He eludes localization. You cannot say He was more contemplative than active: do not the days of busy work balance the nights of lonely prayer? You cannot say He was more fond of solitude than of company: lay emphasis on either side, and there is something in the gospels to which you do injustice. "He is equally at home," it has been beautifully said, "with the saints on the Mount of Transfiguration, and with the sinners bowed at the base." There is no temperament, sanguine or phlegmatic, that will define Him: no type of outlook that will describe His, for He conceived His purposes on the most gigantic scale, yet spent Himself in the interest of individuals. The great experiences of His life are seen now to be prototypes of generic spiritual experiences of mankind: "it is the lot," said Pascal, whose gaze so pierced the spiritual, "it is the lot of every Christian to have those things happen to him which happened to Jesus Christ." Christ is the Universal Human Norm: His life the mould in which is fashioned the life of the humanity He came to create, His death the symbol and spring of the universal experience by which men emerge into spiritual freedom.

Such is the truth of the Universality of Jesus which it will be the purpose of these chapters further to exhibit. One cannot speak in a mat-

ter of this kind of adducing incontrovertible "proofs." But much may be doné—and this is what will here be attempted—to bear in upon the mind a convincing impression of the reality and value of this Universality by a series of studies in the story of Jesus, setting forth what is plainly and of design congruous with the idea of His world-wide significance. This series of studies will be entered upon in our next chapter; meanwhile, it may be well to note one or two of the most obvious consequences to our view of Christ and of His work which must follow upon an appreciation of His central position as the sole instance of the Catholic Man.

1.—To begin with, how comes it that the gospels, fragmentary as they confessedly are, combine to portray a Figure so perfect in symmetry? You do not say the last word on Inspiration when you have appeared to demonstrate that the gospels come from manifold sources, contain many strata of documents, were written, not by the four authors whose names they bear, but pseudonymously and by many later hands. The more complex the origin of the gospels, the greater is the marvel of the Resultant Portrait which they present to our view. So long as the flawless beauty of that Figure and its lonely eminence in the perfect balance of all the parts of its uniquely rich humanity remain to astonish

the world, so long will a problem as to the origin of these gospels remain which no critical disintegration of their documentary elements can ever solve. In the end of the day the Unity of the Central Figure in these stories will point to the unity of the One Mind that inspired them, and the Conception of the Universal Divine man which they enshrine will bear to candid eyes the seal of its own Divine origin.

2.—Again, if Jesus be thus lonely in His universality, have we not need of caution when we speak of the “humanity” of Jesus, as though it meant that He is simply one of ourselves? If all that I have tried to suggest as to His freedom from limitations be correct, *then it is precisely in His humanity that He stands apart from us*, and our instincts did not mislead us when they suggested inadequacy, as well as irreverence, in such phrases as “The comrade Christ.” Men have been telling us that the Christ we need is simply a man like ourselves, and that we would find this man in the gospels if we went to them with eyes cleansed from dogmatic prejudice; but we have not found this, and we begin to see that the Epistle to the Hebrews has the truer insight into our need, when it tells us that we need “a High Priest, holy, harmless, undefiled, and *separate from sinners*”: separate, not simply as sinless from sinful—that alone might dismay and crush us; but separate as complete from imperfect, as

universal from partial—that heartens us, for in Christ we begin to see in its fullness God’s Idea of what He would fain have us become.

3.—Once more, if the Christ be thus essentially universal, must not the ideal of the Christian character be that of a world-embracing love? We must evidently take care how we specialize the Christian character. The word “Christian” must not be narrowed down to mean charitable or forgiving or courteous. It must not be limited to one hemisphere of character. The Christian ideal “is neither characteristically noble and grand, nor characteristically amiable and beautiful; but both in an equal degree, perfectly and indistinguishably, the fusion of the two classes of qualities being complete, so that the mental eye, though it be strained to aching, cannot discern whether that on which it gazes be more the object of reverence or of love.”¹ If, then, the Christian character has a premier virtue, it is magnanimity; if it has a premier vice, it is parochialism. The exclusive, narrow, provincial, selfish spirit is the negation of Christianity. He is likeliest to Christ who, like Him, holds the world in his heart: carries it on his bosom in intercessory solicitude: works, the brother of all good men, for its reconciliation to God.

4.—And, finally, to see clearly the Catholicity of Jesus, is to feel assured of the future univer-

¹ Goldwin Smith.

salinity of His sway. We begin to catch a glimpse of that vision which so fascinated the eyes of Paul in his later years—of an age-long purpose of God to bring about through Christ the “reconciliation,” the “gathering together” of the scattered and disparate elements of creation. The nations of the earth—Jew and Gentile alike—have had for ages each their own discipline in separation: sister races, they have been “gardens enclosed.” Heroes and leaders of thought God had raised up, each the embodiment of His people’s ideals, alike the expression and the helper of the national discipline. But in the fullness of the time the New Man appeared, whose nationality was frontierless, whose sympathies were wide as the love of God, whose appeal was to the humanity He represented. In Him began the reconciling movement, and the nations as they knew Him began to draw together. We are but at the beginning of this process still; for how little is He truly known! But we are beginning to see the nations bringing their “glory”—their distinctive contribution—to the fullness of His kingdom. We here out in the West understand but a fragment of His colossal mind: the mystical collectivism of the East must ally itself with the aggressive individualism of the West, ere His wisdom, which so perfectly holds the balance between the two, or rather envelops both, can be translated and made plain. It is time to be done with hasty

scorn of Eastern thought as though we Westerns, who use a foreign text-book for our religion, perfectly understood. No; we cannot comprehend Him alone, nor will He be adequately interpreted until the nimble and dexterous energy of the West, the pensive patience of the East, the strenuous gravity of the North, the tender passion of the South, combine to show Him forth; and the Universal Church, in its varied thought and life, reflect the manifold ¹ wisdom of God as it is seen in Christ Jesus our Lord.

¹ πολυποικίλος (see Eph 3: 10).

III

THE WITNESS OF HIS ENVIRONMENT

“THIS thing was not done in a corner,” said Paul to Agrippa, speaking of the cardinal facts which constitute the beginning of Christianity. But this is precisely the reproach which has often been cast by imperfectly informed minds upon the Christian religion, viz., that its capital events occurred in a remote and obscure part of the world, their place and occasion being so mean that they are wholly incongruous with the idea that Christianity is the final religion, and its Founder the Divine Saviour of the world. “Were Christ the final Herald of God to men,” it is urged, “He would have been set on high, where men could see and hear Him : the theatre of His mission would have been some great world-centre, where the great interests and races of mankind were represented and converged, and not in a secluded, unimportant province, fanatical in religion, it is true, but otherwise lying out of the strong current of human life and enterprise. It is absurd to inflate into a world-religion a movement whose essentially parochial nature is stamped on every fact of its origin.”

And it is to be feared that even some Christian

people, in the interest of a sentimental cult of the lowliness of Jesus, have so represented the remoteness and obscurity of His origin as seriously to distort the facts,¹ imagining that the grace of God is magnified by attributing His choice of the *locus* and environment of the Advent of His Son to a love of obscurity for obscurity's sake.

Now, what are the facts?

Jesus was a Syrian: and to appreciate the significance of that fact one must know something, however elementary, of Syria's place in history and in the world. Happily, we may here be helped by the vivid generalizations of a brilliant scholar. "Syria is distinguished by its central position in geography—between Asia and Africa, and between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean, which is Europe: and the *rôle* in history of the Semitic race has been also intermediary. The Semites have been the great middlemen of the world. Not second-rate in war, they have risen to the first rank in commerce and religion. They have been the carriers between East and West, they have stood between the great ancient civilizations and those which go to make up the modern world. . . . To put it more particu-

¹ "So many simple shepherds keeping flocks
In many moonlit fields! but, only they—
So lone, so long ago, so far away—
On that one winter's night, at Bethlehem,
To have white Angels singing lauds for them!"
—Sir Edwin Arnold, "The Light of Asia."

larly, Syria lies between two continents—Asia and Africa: between two primeval homes of men—the valleys of the Euphrates and the Nile: between two great centres of empire—Western Asia and Egypt: between all these, representing the Eastern and ancient world, and the Mediterranean, which is the gateway to the Western and modern world.”¹

In ancient times this “intermediary land” was intersected by great roads—some of the “world’s most famous highways”—trodden for centuries by the “carriers between East and West.”

Among these great thoroughfares there are three that have especially affected the history of men: the great trade route passing through Damascus, which conveyed the “products of India to Venice, Genoa, Marseilles”: the old war road from Assyria to Egypt; the “frankincense” road to Arabia—highway of the merchant and the pilgrim. Commerce; War; Religion:—these “delivered themselves” across these bridges between the two halves of the known world. And there are no greater “unifiers of humanity” than these. The exchange of goods helps to circulate one language, and one common standard of justice: the exchange of thought helps men, however wide apart their traditions have been,

¹G. A. Smith, “The Historical Geography of the Holy Land.”

to conceive of their lives as one: even armies, despite the curse and sin of war, have been in the mysterious providence of God among the foremost heralds of fraternity.

Now these roads, carrying upon them the very machinery for the unification of humanity, laden with the burdens which were the harbingers and promise of reconciliation, *met in Galilee*, the province of Syria in which Jesus was brought up. Nazareth lay within fifteen miles of the seaport by which the Roman officials and soldiers poured into the East. The home of Jesus, so far from being a country town of proverbial insignificance, was "in constant intercourse with centres of business and news,"¹ and as regards the early receiving of these from Rome, had the advantage even of Jerusalem and Judea. *There*—at the crossroads of the world—in closest touch with the busiest life of the world, grew up the Saviour of mankind. Verily, *this thing was not done in a corner*: but in a land in contact alike with the mystery of the East and the promise of the West, preserved from stagnation by having been for centuries the theatre of war, and receiving into itself cosmopolitan influences as no other land could do, *there*, in the fullness of the time, the Catholic Man was born.

* * * * *

¹ Dr. Selah Merrill, "Galilee in the Time of Christ."

“In the fullness of the time.” However unlearned we may be, the broad facts regarding the state of the known world at the beginning of the Christian era must have filtered down into our minds, and we must have heard how singularly favourable that epoch was for the advent of a Universal Man and a Universal Religion. It is notorious that just then the world had come to have a centre as it had never had before. “Even apart from Christianity, the reign of Augustus over the whole Roman empire was an epoch-making period. Never before had the various races of mankind been united under one universal empire which promised to be permanent.” As a politically independent state Greece had received her mortal wound: and, dying, had left as a legacy to her Roman conqueror her language, her culture, the skeleton of her philosophies, her vices and her gods. The East, too, bowed her impassive head before the Roman victor: and other races joined in the epidemic of submission; “till, from the Euphrates to the Atlantic, from the shores of Britain and the borders of the German forests to the sands of the African desert, the whole Western world was consolidated into one great commonwealth, united by bonds of law and government, by facilities of communication and commerce, and by the general dissemination of the Greek and Latin languages.”

“To all this Augustus added a perfectly devised centralization which made the empire a compact whole, so that any new influence made its throbs felt from centre to extremities in a wonderfully short time.” And this vast organism was tenanted by one spirit, but it was a spirit of weariness, of unrest, of soul-hunger. “The old national creeds were fast disappearing, and were being submerged in the vast cosmopolitan religion of Rome.” “The various deities were looked on as interchangeable manifestations of a supreme fate-power who reigned alone in the invisible world, while in this visible earth the genius of Rome seemed to be the one object of worship.” “The old national religions, with their well-defined outlines and limits were being gradually effaced, and men were longing for some religion which, while it had the universal character which the times required, should have more individuality and personal power in it than were supplied by the thoughts of a supreme spiritual fate or by the more materialist conception of the genius of Rome.”¹

Now, in one part of the world, and one only, lay hidden the thought which could bring satisfaction to this soul-hunger, and refreshment to this wide-spread weariness, and transform this agglomeration of weary slaves of Rome into a universal brotherhood in religion, a “household of

¹ Lindsay, Art. “Christianity,” *Encycl. Brit.*

faith." Syria was the home of a religion more narrow and provincial than any of the varied cults tolerated within the Roman Empire, yet at the heart of that Syrian faith lay, encrusted and obscured by the traditions of men, the conception of One Holy God, the God of Righteousness, the God of the whole earth, "merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." Could but the saving forces that lay in such a conception of God as this be released and made available for all the world, new life and hope would stir the heart of the weary nations. And in point of fact, the records of the history of these Syrian Semites show that from the very earliest times there lay within the racial bosom the consciousness of a religious mission to all mankind. Their great chief, Abraham, knew himself called to "be a blessing" to all the families of the earth: and though the missionary task had never been undertaken,¹ and the common people of the Jews for centuries had read their universalistic religion in a provincial translation and construed the broadest calls to redeem the world as intimations of exclusive privilege for themselves, yet the best spirits among them

¹ To-day it is the same. It is scarcely too much to say that modern orthodox Judaism neither makes converts nor desires them.

had not forgotten the meaning of the sacred deposit entrusted to them, and had both read the national history and sought to shape it in terms of the nation's religious mission to the world. Now it was from the heart of *this* people, that the Nazarene sprang, who was to take up the neglected task of His people, and proclaim to the world the life-giving truth which for centuries His people had hidden under the bushel of a sorry national ignorance and pride.

Standing on the hillsides of Galilee—*Galilee of the nations*—on the whispering gallery of the world—the Syrian Jesus, heir of the best Jewish traditions yet free from every trace of Jewish exclusiveness, proclaimed the truths of the universal love of the Father God, of freedom for the captive, of rest for every weary soul, and of the one universal Kingdom of God: and it is matter of history how swiftly the good news spread, how the moribund world stirred from its weary apathy, and many souls were set free, “each holding by Christ’s word.” And from that hour to this, the happy news has spread—bringing life and hope to regions far beyond the limits of the ancient world: and “the Christian religion, born in Judea, formulated in Greece, organized in Rome, accepted and with unparalleled vigour propagated by Teuton and Frank, yet neither Jewish, Greek, Roman nor Saxon” has spread and is spreading throughout

the whole earth, constituting itself in every land the basis of an Empire of Christ more solid and lasting and infinitely more compact in loyalty and freedom than the proudest empires of the world.

Is it possible, then, to avoid seeing, in the place and time of Christ's advent, the very focus of history, the human extremity which was God's supreme opportunity, the end of the eras of separation, the beginning of the æon of Catholicity? The Man for that fateful hour was no mere local hero, embodying the traditions and exhibiting the limitations of one particular race, but the Man from heaven, related to man everywhere, Catholic, Universal, Type of the era He had come to introduce, the perfect expression in the flesh of what God would have men everywhere to be.

IV

THE WITNESS OF HIS ORIGIN

THE interest which we feel in the origin of any one who has deeply affected the life of men is never merely curious: it is always more or less consciously a search for explanation, for an answer to the question, "Whence hath this man these things?"

The extant memoirs of Jesus differ widely in the degree to which they respond to this interest. The earliest gospel, which is now only a torso, plunges into the story without any account of the parentage of Jesus; for the phrase, "Son of God," in its opening verse, cannot be taken as intended to be an account of His origin: it is rather a succinct estimate of His religious significance. The latest gospel, on the other hand, begins in the unscaleable heights of pre-Creation days, and declares that ere the worlds began to be, in the unbeginning life of God, lived the conscious and luminous life which afterwards was manifest among men as Jesus of Nazareth. The question of the origin of Jesus is thus pressed back by the fourth gospel out of the region of history altogether. Midway between these extremes are the

Gospels of Matthew and Luke, which lay an unmistakable stress on the facts of the human genealogy and parentage of Jesus, and for our present purpose it will be well to think chiefly of these accounts, and what they are intended to import.

When we have read the first few verses of the first chapter of Matthew, it becomes evident to us that the compiler of the genealogy with which the book opens, must have had in his mind some purpose other than the mere writing of a chronicle, or the production of an accurate table of pedigree. In point of fact, the genealogy he writes down is demonstrably no more than approximately accurate: it is out of gear with versions of the same family tree of greater antiquity. And, indeed, when we look closely at his opening sentence it becomes clear that some other than a physical succession is in the writer's mind. "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, *the son of David, the son of Abraham.*" Abraham had no "son" named David, in the usual meaning of the word "son." It is obvious that we are having recalled to us a succession into the conception of which more than the idea of physical generation enters. It is a *national* succession; but the nation (as is made evident by the choice of names in the incomplete list) is viewed in some special relation.

When our eyes travel down from the opening of the genealogy to the summary of generations at its close, and note the prominence given to two great political-religious crises in the history of the nation to whom the individuals in the genealogical list belong, it begins to be evident that the succession which is in view is a succession of persons carrying forward and illustrating a *national discipline*, of which discipline Jesus is presented as in some way the consummation.

Now what, in point of fact, was that discipline? What was the Divine idea behind the training of the Jewish people whose history is here summarized by means of a selection of representative names? The answer is not far to seek. It is matter of history that the Jewish people have had from the earliest times a special religious bias, and their most ancient records reflect their conviction that, as a people, they were called to be the religious teachers of mankind. For this end they were not only to know religious truth, but were to illustrate it in their own lives. This was the Divine idea behind their extraordinary history, and towards its realization the national discipline was meant to tend. The typical result in the individual case of that discipline was called "faith": *i. e.*, the capacity to appreciate the spiritual: the spirit that ventures forth upon and seeks to find itself in the will of God: the spirit of self-surrender to the Divine

purpose. It was by this "faith" that the "elders obtained a good report"; in other words, it was faith that made names great in Israel, and the ideal Israelite was the alert and expectant servant of God.

Now, if we keep these things in mind, we begin to see defining itself the atmosphere in which the nativity stories in the gospels of Matthew and Luke are meant to move. We are introduced to a circle of persons who illustrate the fruits of the nation's age-long discipline: persons like Joseph, Mary, Zacharias, Elizabeth, Simeon, Anna: persons in whom their piety is the chief thing, who "wait for the consolation of Israel"; who believe in the further unfolding of the Divine purpose to Israel, and attend, expectant spectators and servants of God's holy design. In the ancient days the prophets had declared that a Remnant of this pious and expectant temper would remain, however wide-spread among the masses of the people might be forgetfulness of God. That Remnant would abide as the spiritual kernel and core of the nation—the last home and fortress of the splendid conception at the heart of Israel's history, viz., that Israel, as God's servant, *bore the sacred deposit of a universal religion*, to be in due time shared with all the world. It is this "Remnant" that is introduced to us on the gospel page in the representative persons I have just named: and from the midst

of that Remnant—from the very citadel wherein was sacredly guarded the holy hope of one universal religion for all mankind—from this “Holiest of all” among mankind sprang Jesus, in whom the Divine idea of a religious Herald to all the world was at last incarnate.

It is from this point of view, then, that we should look upon the persons who surround the nativity of Jesus. It is their religious significance that is made dominant in their portraiture: it is their character and their sense of God that are emphasized. Let us see how this is illustrated in the person who next to Jesus is central in the group—Mary, His mother.

The Protestant revolt against the Roman cultus of Mary has not been effected without loss, especially loss of the habit of appreciating Mary’s place in the history of religion.

Protestants have contented themselves with thinking of her mainly as a sad-spirited, wistful, and not always wise disciple of her Son; or, at the most, have dwelt a little speculatively, a little sentimentally, upon the pensive beauty of the soul of the woman whose face Christ’s most resembled, from whom He drew that womanliness which in Him blended so marvellously with vigorous manhood, and from whom He must have learned His first religious lessons. But, for the rest, Protestants commonly think of Mary simply

as a maid of Nazareth ; they do not think of her place at the summit of Old Testament religion, nor of the status of august eminence to which she was raised by the grace of God within her ; and by this neglect her peculiar fitness to be the mother of Jesus Christ is forgotten or ignored. But consider how the facts stand. The really lonely eminence of Mary is neither (as the Roman Church has sometimes represented it)—the eminence of chastity, nor the eminence of sorrow. The chief of the glories of Mary was her primacy in *self-surrender*.

Recall once more the fact that the *Divine service* was the idea central to the history of her people : that time and again in the preceding centuries God had tested her people to see whether there was still alive among them the servant-spirit. To these tests many had failed to respond : the faithful Remnant had always answered, " Here am I." But not till now had the *supreme* test of the spirit of self-surrender been issued, and it was to Mary of Nazareth—Heart of the Remnant—that the call came. She was called to a service which not only involved the risk of life—how was she to know that the price to be paid for the motherhood of the Messiah would not be death ?—but which involved the surrender of that which to a true woman is more than life, her honour : not, that is to say, her purity, but the comfort of purity, in the inevitable exposure to misunder-

standing and shame. She was called to a service which meant the expulsion of the *ego* from its most intimate and guarded fastness—meant, too, the absolute abandonment of herself and of all that her previous piety had made her to be worth in her own sight, in venturesome faith upon the commanding word of God. Hear her response. “Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it unto me according to Thy word.”

It was the highest instance the world had yet seen of that “faith” by which her pious ancestors among God’s people had “obtained a good report”: it was the high-water mark of human piety up to that time. This daughter of Abraham, called to the painful eminence of service, had given herself up, as her great forefather had done, to be the channel of blessing to the families of the earth, and in her heart she knew something of the potencies within her act of self-surrender. “From henceforth,” she sang, “all generations shall call me blessed.”

Here then, up to the measure then reached by human capacity trained by long discipline, was incarnate that spirit of utter self-abandonment to and union of will with the Holy will of God, which is *the basal idea in universal religion*. It was, surely, singularly fitting that she who, by the grace of God, thus incarnated that spirit should be the human fount of the being of Him who carried to so much loftier heights the spirit

of self-surrender, and who has realized in Himself a perfect union with the will of God, which has issued in incalculable service to mankind.

Not until this unique historical position of Mary of Nazareth has been realized are we able rightly to approach the subject of the Virgin Birth of Christ—the allegation that Mary *alone* on the human side was concerned in the physical origin of Jesus. The subject is at once too intricate and too delicate to be fully treated here; but it has too direct a bearing on the truth which it is the purpose of these chapters to illustrate, to be altogether passed by. The credibility of the story will in the end depend on the estimate formed of the persons involved in the story, and on the estimate formed of the story's congruity with their whole history. Not that there are not other grounds for believing the allegation of the Virgin Birth. The “external” evidence of the story is stronger than is often supposed, and has never been quite successfully torn asunder. Answering to aspirations which had found expression in Paganism, the story is yet on every line of it not Pagan, but Jewish—Palestinian in origin and in colour; yet it runs directly counter to the instincts of Jewish monotheism, and its *invention* on Jewish soil is, to any one who knows what Judaism was and is, absolutely incredible. Again, the narrative makes upon the

reader the impression of holy beauty, of modest reticence, of devout chastity, and as one reads and reads again, the conviction is driven home, not only that the alternative to its truthfulness is unthinkable in itself, but that it is inconceivable that out of the alternative could have arisen a story which itself is virgin-pure.

On grounds like these a foothold may be found for favourable acceptance of the story; at least, by those who have not foolishly foreclosed the subject by *à priori* antagonism to the supernatural.

But, as I have said, in the end intelligent faith in the Virgin Birth must lean back upon and be a consequence of an appreciation of the place in religion both of Mary and her Son. Especially if we are rightly impressed with *His* lonely eminence in the moral and spiritual world, with His supremacy as the incarnation and type of holy purity, shall we feel the force of the contention that the "Virgin Life demands the Virgin Birth"; and if we see in Jesus (as the gospel narrative does exhibit Him to be) a New Type of man, and in His coming the creation of a new order of human beings possessing His *catholic* temper and indwelt by the same Divine spirit that possessed His life—if we see in Christ a new starting point in history, in the direction of a goodness that will be universal, then the congruity of the Virgin Birth with the holy be-

ginnings of this era of the Universal Religion will profoundly impress us. For what is the analogy of the only two other creative acts of God of which we have any knowledge—the creation of intelligent human life and the creation of spiritual life?

Intelligent human life began when the Spirit of God overshadowed and breathed the breath of self-conscious life into that animal organism which, *as the outcome of long processes of development*, was the fittest to receive it. So, at this hour, self-conscious spiritual life begins when the Holy Spirit of God bears down upon the yielding human spirit which *the discipline of thought and life* has brought to the point of surrender.

In both creations the Divine source of universal life unites itself directly with the earthly organism that is prepared for the Divine design.

Now, between these creative acts lies the mystery of the origin of Jesus. His human life began when the Holy Spirit of God, Universal Lord and Giver of Life, overshadowed and united Himself directly with that yielding human organism which, *as the outcome of age long processes of development and discipline*, was not only physically, but spiritually, the fittest agent of the Divine design. It was fitting that Christ should draw part of His parentage from the humanity that had been—from the best of it,

from that person in it in whom, after ages of discipline, it had most nearly drawn to God : it was also fitting that He should draw His life direct from the fount of Universal Life, that it might be evident to all the world that in Him the Race was to find its new spiritual centre and true focus of reconciliation ; and that from Him *the very life of God* should by very human means be conveyed into and become the life of men the whole world over.

For this is both the amazing claim and the equally amazing achievement of Jesus of Nazareth : that by Him there should be inwrought into the hearts of men of the most utterly diverse races, types, tradition and characters, the very temper and disposition of the Living God.¹

¹ Cf. Dorner, "Doctrine," Vol. III, p. 348 seq.

V

THE WITNESS OF HIS BAPTISM

IT is the unconcealed disappointment of Christendom that we know so little of the adolescence of Jesus. The two or three sentences in St. Luke's Gospel, enshrining one charming but puzzling incident, in which His boyhood is referred to, do not satisfy our desire to know about the influences and processes of mind which made Him the man He became. They picture His growth in words which vaguely suggest the harmonious developments of all His powers, and perhaps it is not pressing language too far to say that they briefly describe the adolescence of an ideal human boy. But they disappoint us for this special reason: Jesus of Nazareth is the greatest expert the world has seen in the domain of the problems of sin: absolutely unapproached both as interpreter and healer of the bitter troubles of the human heart which arise from collision with goodness and from self-disgust. Now we want to know whence He obtained His so complete mastery of the pathology of the human heart, through what moral struggles He Himself passed in youth, what vicissitudes marked His progress, what influences shaped His opinions;

and, still more, His character ; and whether there was aught in His early youth that accounted for His subsequently manifesting so singular a combination of detachment from sin's attractions with compassionate insight in dealing with sin's slaves.

About all this the gospels are silent: the adolescence they suggest was beautiful and flawless, but remote ; we are left with nothing more than permission to guess for ourselves, from the incident of His visit as a boy to the temple, whether the problem which He afterwards was seen to have so wonderfully solved, was or was not pressing on His brain and heart.

This puzzling vagueness of the gospels regarding Jesus' adolescence gives way to a singular definiteness and precision in their account of His entrance into public life. The extant memoirs agree in not merely dating that entrance from a definite period, but in relating it to a definite movement—an upheaval of popular feeling in Palestine under the preaching of John the Baptist.

We possess only fragmentary accounts of this movement, for in the gospels the emphasis is laid not on the movement in itself, but on Jesus' share in it ; but its general character is plain enough. It was a tidal wave coming in from the uneasy never-resting sea of man's consciousness of guilt. There are times when this universal human emotion seems nearly quiescent ; such a

time we are passing through now : but " we can never be sure that any day will pass when the emotion of unforgiven sin may not sweep the world " as it swept through Europe in the days of the Flagellants, through England in the days of the Commonwealth, through Palestine in the days of John the Baptist.

There were, no doubt, in John the Baptist's time special circumstances favouring the outburst of this feeling : a wide-spread sense of the exhaustion of moral force, a weariness of the futilities of ceremonial worship and of conventional morality, and a dread of impending judgment—these things drove men to break through the shamed reticence which so often veils the agony of sin, and swept them in crowds to the ministry of the Baptist, who seemed to have something to contribute to the healing of men's soul-distress.

Now of the sincerity, earnestness and (up to a certain limit) the ability to deal with this problem, displayed by the Baptist, we have no room to doubt. Inheriting from a priestly ancestry a bias towards the religious interest, and consecrated from childhood to religious service, he had cultivated and trained in himself the religious sense by an ascetic and retired life, giving himself up to the study of the Old Testament prophets, while he watched as a spectator the currents of the life of his time. As he studied and

prayed he became himself filled with the old prophetic spirit : and issuing from his retirement he appeared before his contemporaries with a message which in part was the confirmation of their own terrified expectations, but in part a call to repentance, and an offer of assurance of the Divine forgiveness.

It is evident, from the fragments of his preaching which have come down to us, that John the Baptist had well assimilated the substance of the message of the Hebrew Scriptures. He had perceived the universalism that lay within the particularist sheath of their teaching : he had caught their strong ethical emphasis, and imbibed and made his own their confident hope in the coming of God Himself into human history to rectify wrong, and to judge and govern the world ; and, most important of all, he had come to see clearly, in spite of the mists which a pretentious sacerdotal and ceremonial system had raised before the eyes of men, the simple truth that God is ever ready to forgive the penitent and to let him begin his life again free from the awful load of guilt. It was John the Baptist's especial merit and especial contribution to religion that he preached thus simply and without reserve the "remission of sins" : and that he had the courage to confirm his message sacramentally, by the homely but eloquent rite of baptism with water.

One would have said that never in the history

of the world might men suffering from the horrible malaise of sin have gone with better hope to a spiritual director than men went to the Baptist by the banks of the Jordan : to hear a comforting announcement of the Divine pardon, balanced by a just insistence on genuine repentance, and an assurance of the determination of the God of Israel to bring the disorders of human society to an ordered end.

And yet John's very success up to a certain point only emphasizes his failure to reach and solve *the whole* problem of the eradication of sin. In particular, in two points his message was defective. On the one hand, he had nothing to say on the question of sacrifice. The religion he preached ignored it, and taught forgiveness simpliciter. Now, it is true that there is a condition of the human heart when the only message it will bear is the simple word—"The Lord hath put away thy sin" ; but when the first chilling paralysis of the soul, in which it has seen only the fact of its sin, has passed—dispelled by the simple word of forgiveness—there arises a need for some rationale of the forgiveness—the ashamed soul needs to know how it comes about that it is forgiven. The idea of the need of expiation cannot be dislodged from the mind : sacrifice somewhere is craved for : *some one* must bear the sin. For all this need, John the Baptist had no message, and there is reason to believe

that he felt keenly the defectiveness of his message just here.

On the other hand, he was just as consciously inadequate on the subject of the power of sin. He was assured and definite and authoritative on the fact of the forgiveness of past transgression—he had made his own that section of the doctrine of grace: but he could not tell men how to check sin's onset. When people confessed their past sins, he announced and confirmed to them the Divine forgiveness: but when they next asked him how they were now to order their forgiven lives, he was feeble and inept to the last degree, and could only stammer out a few commonplaces of elementary morality.¹

And John was too full of spiritual discernment not to feel his defect. "I baptize you," he said, "with water, but another must baptize you with the fire of a holy disposition." The spiritual ardour which would ward off sin's assaults he could not communicate any more than he could solve the mystery of expiation.

It is when the story has made these things plain to us, and the impotence of man even at his best to "redeem" his brother has been by John's splendid failure conclusively shown—it is *then* that the curtain is raised which has veiled the adolescence of Jesus, and as the young

¹ See Luke 3 : 10-14.

Christ moves in upon the scene, we are made to feel the solemn dignity and promiseful significance of His arrival. He comes to ask for baptism; and John, who has seen many penitents and knows at once that this is not one of them, protests: "I have need to be baptized of Thee: and comest Thou to me?" Jesus turns upon him "the dominance of earnest eyes," and with a word of gentle authority bends the Baptist's will to His, and the baptism proceeds. The two men enter the water. It has been John's custom to demand audible confession of sin in token of its renunciation, and many a story of shame he must have heard as the candidate for pardon unburdened his heart. But now, as Jesus stands beside him, John hears a new and astonishing kind of confession: the sin, not of Jesus Himself, but of His people, of His time, of the world is carried in confession before God, as if it were the man's own. John's ear catches an enumeration of the sins of men comprehensive, unerring, detailed—hears the note of a new wide-reaching compassion, the accent of an infinite sorrow—is made to feel the heat of zeal for holiness that burns through it all: and his heart thrills with joy as he recognizes that here in his very presence is He who will complete the imperfect message, who will explain sacrifice, for He Himself possesses the sacrificial Heart: and who will be the storehouse of moral

enthusiasm from which the people may draw what they need to help them to be good. "Behold!" he said to his followers, pointing to Jesus: "Here is the Sacrificial Heart that carries the burden of the whole world's sin! This is He of whom I spake who should convey not pardon only, but the fire of a holy passion for goodness into the hearts of men. I am not worthy to be His slave."

At the very outset of His public career, then, there was thus recognized in Jesus by the man who next to Himself was probably the best equipped and most catholic-minded religionist then alive, a peculiar fitness for a world wide mission of salvation. "He carries," said John, astounded by the volume and range of Jesus' compassion, "He carries, not as I do, the burden of my country's need: He *bears the sin of the world!*"

The note of universality is thus struck at the threshold of Christ's career: already He carries "the world in His heart." And as He consecrates Himself to a work which is to be world-wide, and to deal with man as man, there comes to Him an experience which is essentially generic, the reward everywhere and always: of self-dedication to God for the redemptive service of man. "He saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him, and there came a voice from heaven saying: 'Thou

art My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.' That is to say, His self-consecration was rewarded *as ours is to-day* by a clearer vision of the purposes of God, by a quiet consciousness of endowment with God-given capacity for the work, and by a vivid sense of holy and filial intimacy with the Divine Being Himself. It is true that inasmuch as Jesus of Nazareth has rendered to mankind a redemptive service in which He stands alone, His experience of these three results of consecration was unique in its completeness and in its vividness. But the experience in itself is generic and lasting. It repeats itself to-day from here to the world's end wherever men give themselves to God for their fellow men's sake. The triple blessing still attends the self-surrender of him who, recognizing the uniqueness and the efficacy of Christ's sacrificial and inspiring work for men, would yet fain follow in the train of the Catholic Man, carrying some share with Him of the burden of the world's sin, and burning to baptize men with a holy spirit and with fire.

VI

THE WITNESS OF HIS TEMPTATION

IT is the object of these chapters to show that Jesus of Nazareth was and is the Man for all men. Of dogmas regarding Jesus men have of late grown weary : but the experiences of His life, so far as they are known, retain and will retain their fascination and appeal.

I believe it can be shown that these experiences so follow the lines of the generically human, of what is true for all men, and point the way to the solution of so many problems affecting human life universally, as to compel the conviction that this is, at least, one design behind the record of His career, viz. : that it should exhibit once for all the central, archetypal human life in its victory over all incompleteness, and over all evil. This conviction is specially forced upon any one who ponders much on the story known as the Temptation of Jesus. Standing where it does in the record of His career, a *resumé* of the main elements in His soul-travail as He stood on the threshold of His life's work, it reflects not His temptations only, but ours : setting forth under the veil of parable, the universal human threshold fight, the multiform yet essentially threefold

moral encounter men everywhere must endure who would at the outset of their career place themselves in the path to true success.

We shall see this best if we try to realize the original setting of the incident: the generic character of the conflict will shine through its individual historical form.

The story must have come at first from Jesus Himself, and is clothed in the symbolical language which He loved to use in His teaching. The symbolism has a double purpose: it gathers within a single pictorial representation the essence of what may have been numerous suggestions of evil, and it avails to conceal details which we need not know and probably could not understand. For at the outset we must remember the gulf which separates the form of Christ's experiences from ours. That was unique, as His vocation was: it is the moral core of the experience that is generic.

I

It is plain, to begin with, that the conflict attaches itself to the story of His baptism, and answers in its threefold form to the threefold experience of endowment which came to Jesus on His self-consecration at the banks of the Jordan. At that sacred moment He had been given the vision always vouchsafed to those who consecrate their lives to God—the vision of the Divine mind

and heart in its redemptive purpose: He had felt assured of adequate equipment for His part in that great purpose, and He knew Himself called to the privilege of peculiarly close fellowship with God.

He would not have been human had there been no "excitement of His mind" caused by this "nascent consciousness" of a special vocation and of special privilege: nor are we surprised that He should be driven to seek solitude that He might think out the many implicates of the revelation just made to Him. For a long time He remained so absorbed in thought that even nature's claims were ignored. We cannot pierce the veil that covers that momentous spell of meditation: we only know it involved a survey of the problem before Him which gathered up the thinking of thirty ears—even as a boy had He not studied His Father's "business"?—and that it left nothing out. (For afterwards He moved to the fulfillment of His work in the singular peace of one who has thought out his plan completely and is master of every contingency, there being no unanticipated factor in the problem to take him suddenly by surprise.) We may rest assured, too, that in these anticipations of His share in the unfolding of God's redemptive work, there was the thrill of joy born of His loving sympathy both for God and man.

This passion of intense meditation could not,

of course, last : and we feel we are in the presence of a very real human experience when we read that it was followed by a reaction to languor and perplexity. With the waning of unnourished physical powers, the vivid light, that had for the time well-nigh transformed faith into sight, began to fail. The vision faded : the clamour of the body's needs awoke : and certitude gave place to wonder and concern. God had surely said : "This is My beloved Son" : whence then this faintness and exhaustion ? Had the words been real, as certainly this exhaustion is ? Why not test the matter and make sure ? "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Why not ? Surely the Son of God need not be hungry, and may manipulate for sacramental ends the creation of God—and would not the bread He made be a sacramental seal of the Father's message ? Besides, here was work to be done, and surely for strength for the work one must have food ?

But Jesus found protection from the "Yea, hath God said ?" by going back on words of God which could not be gainsaid. He had read in the ancient scriptures of the value God set upon faith as a means of man's moral education, and that not physical comfort only, but attendance upon God's mind made the fulfillment of human life. Now in His baptism He had definitely ranged Himself with men, and had entered the path

God had appointed for all men towards the "fulfillment of all righteousness." By that He would abide. "Man shall not live," He quoted—(Is not the "instinct of universality" behind His use of "Man"?)—"by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." If other men in the path of obedience went hungry, He would go hungry too: God, who had given Him work, would keep Him alive to do it. He would not prematurely end God's trial of His faith by the use of God's gifts for ends of self-indulgence.

Now every one can see that this temptation marks out the lines of a decision which awaits men universally on the threshold of an independent adult career, and Christ's repulse of the temptation indicates the only lines on which the decision can move, if it is to usher in a successful career.

To every man there comes, at the opening of manhood, a period when consciousness of endowment and power (whether physical, intellectual, or spiritual), becomes vivid and intense: some natures are apt just then to be peculiarly "irresponsible" and prodigal of strength. But that period is succeeded by a time of cooler self-questioning, spurred on, it may be, by the prosaic needs of the body. One must live: to what use then shall one put one's powers? And here, behind all the apparent variety of answers that offer

themselves, there is one fundamental moral choice to be made: between the life that puts self first, and the life that puts God first. What desires "self" may in any given case connote will depend on many details of individual experience and character: but in essence the decision is in all cases the same. "If," said Jesus in a memorable saying into which He compressed in didactic form a record of His threefold victory in the wilderness, "if any man will come after Me, let him deny himself." That first: fundamental in all successful living is that denial of self, of which the correlative is the assertion of God, the practical recognition of the fact that life's fulfillment is to be found not in abundance of personal gratification, but in the Godward trend of the desires, and the expectant waiting upon the unfolding of His will.

II

Even to begin to understand the other temptations, it is necessary to recall what were the great factors in the problem before Jesus. He was going forth for nothing less than the salvation of men: to make a world-wide appeal to men on behalf of God, and to reintegrate the broken and disparate elements of humanity by means of a common attachment, loyalty and debtorship to God. In thinking out this vast design, He could not ignore the peculiar position of His own nation,

Israel. That nation occupied, in the matter of religion, a place by itself, and must be considered by itself. It pressed to the forefront of His thoughts. He loved Israel, and knew the work God had already wrought for her. He loved the temple and venerated the institutions of which it was the splendid centre. What was to be His relation to these things? He had a spiritual gift to bestow upon His people: how bestow it if not through the existing forms of their religion? How else commend the gift? If He should come to His people apart from these venerated forms and abjuring the authority they could confer, would not His message be opposed, misunderstood, refused? But why make such a breach with the past? With Jerusalem as His centre, the temple His cathedral, the High priesthood His vantage ground, with what *éclat* might He not usher in the era of pure worship! Jesus knew He could secure all this, if He cared: was He not the Son of God? Why not then put forth His powers to secure all these advantages for His great enterprise? In the patriotic task of reviving the prestige of Israel's ancient forms of faith and of infilling them with a new spirit, might He not count on the Divine support?

So ran the plausible suggestion, appealing at once to Jesus' love of His people and His faith in God. But He reflected that to yield to this suggestion meant to betray distrust of the

Father's equipment and guidance already given. The course He was to follow was already so far indicated in the Providential course along which He had been brought. He was born of the tribe of Judah: "of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood." He would, therefore, have been going out of His way if He were to become a High Priest, and set Himself upon a hierarchical eminence. To seek alliance with the temple forces would have been to mistrust the power of His message in itself, to do despite to the powers with which His Father had entrusted Him, and to seek short and easy and ambitious paths to success by meretricious aid and by compromise of truth. Jesus with firmness declined thus to provoke to wrath the God of righteousness.

Here again surely is the prototype of a universal threshold struggle of young manhood. Confidence in one's powers, even in youth, has its interstices of misgiving; and one makes from time to time anxious survey of the forces against one, and again of the forces which may be called to one's aid. No true man is ignorant of the severity of the temptation at such a time to make compromising alliances: to lean on something other than God's own manifest equipment, and to follow some course less obviously beset by thorns than the course His providence has marked out. To seek brilliance by the sacrifice of fidelity

and thoroughness, to evade toil and suffering by compromising principle—this is the ubiquitous temptation of universal man. Christ knew and overcame it in the subtlest and most specious form in which it had ever been presented to a human mind.

III

Of the third temptation less needs to be said, for its meaning lies more upon the surface. The naked brusqueness of the devil's offer: "All these things will I give Thee if Thou wilt fall down and worship me," reveals the tempter's desperation. Jesus saw before Him, as many a man has seen since, the heritage of glory that seemed the appropriate reward and the possible acquisition of His gifts. If He were to live by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God, if He were to live by and for the spiritual ideal, there must be no thought of such prizes; they must be abjured and the heart set only on the ideal and on its service. But why not abjure the ideal instead, and become frankly carnal? Why not abandon the eternal and live for an earthly successful "now"? The indignation with which Jesus thrusts from Him this degrading suggestion is the measure of the swiftness of His perception of its origin and the certificate that His earlier victories had braced Him for its onset. The assault of gross world-

liness fell back at once from the might of His consecration to the worship and service of God alone.

But the tireless tempter comes still to lesser spirits with this same appeal. Moments come, and especially on the threshold of manhood, when the young aspirant stumbles and faints: and his ideals threaten to fall away from him. He confronts the Hill of Difficulty and the tedious climb dismays. Why not abandon the toil and frankly abandon spiritual aspiration? "Let us eat and drink, for ——" but the soul that is held in leash by devotion to the worship and service of God recovers swiftly, and if it has met earlier and more specious advances of evil successfully, this daring onset of the devil absolutely fails.

Now let us place together these three temptations of the young Christ. Self-gratification: truth-compromising ambition: worldliness. These are three universal threshold foes of young manhood: is there a fourth? The more closely one studies them the more clearly one sees that these exhaust the tale of the temptations that vex the path of him who is being initiated into the responsibilities of life. There are refinements and varieties of each, doubtless, in myriads: we may call them what we will—with Saint John "the world, the flesh, and the devil," "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and

the pride of life"; or, with the modern Harnack, "ambition, worldliness, and sensuality":¹ but they remain the same triad of moral foes.

And Jesus is the Man for all men; not only because in His moral conflicts He thus covered the field of all men's conflicts at the corresponding stage in their experience: and not only because this victory was so decisive that His whole career was an unbroken reflection of His resistance to evil on the threshold: but also because by the paths He chose, and the issues to which He brought the life of sacrifice and of obedience and of fidelity to spiritual ideals, He has triumphantly shown the way to life's fulfillment. He who preferred hunger to impious haste for satisfaction—in Him now dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily: He who glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest in Israel is now confessedly the High Priest of Humanity, the Captain of its salvation, its spiritual supreme: and to the righteously scornful rejector of power unrighteously offered, is now granted "all authority in heaven and in earth." Surely in Jesus is the secret of Life made manifest.

¹ Harnack, "St. Augustine," p. 140.

VII

THE WITNESS OF HIS TRANSFIGURATION

To pass at once from the Temptation to the Transfiguration is to leave untouched much that not only appeals to one's reverent interest, but is full of suggestion for our present purpose. But, first, these Studies in the Universality of Jesus make no claim to deal with more than a few representative fragments of the records of Christ's life; and, next, I believe that the Transfiguration cannot be seen in its full significance for us until it is placed in thought close to the Temptation in the wilderness.

One has, indeed, need of patience, of self-distrust, and of the indulgence of one's fellows as one approaches this experience of Jesus, so lofty, yet so intimately human. Our eyes are too weak to penetrate to the heart of its meaning: we cannot follow step by step the course of an unstained human soul as it rises to the consummation of its prayer-life. Yet this one knows: that were this experience not a part of the record of Christ's life, we could not have recognized in Him as we do the faultless expo-

sition of the ideas lying behind the aspirant life of universal man.

The position of the incident in the gospel story is defined with special care. It represented at once a consummation and a new beginning.

In the first stage of our Lord's intercourse with His disciples it had evidently been one of His chief designs to lead their minds out to some appreciation of the unique significance of His own person. Obviously they could not rightly appreciate, still less fitly carry forward, His work, while they remained in the dark as to His own place in the designs of God. It was a task of supreme delicacy to "break the news" of His person's significance to these simple men without crushing their minds by supernatural display, or alienating their affection by an obtrusive egoism. Every reader of the gospels knows how exquisitely the work was done, and by what subtle gradations of suggestion these Galilæans were led till they breathed, without dismay and with naïve joy, the atmosphere of an ampler Presence and a fuller Life than even God's greatest servants had shown. At last, when the time was ripe to bring their faith to self-consciousness, Jesus withdrew His disciples from the scenes of His ministry to a border town, and there tested their intelligence regarding Himself. Beginning by asking for a report

of the people's verdict, He soon came to their own; and when Peter, his love and admiration rushing into expression, declared "Thou art the Christ!" Jesus, by the emotion of His reply, shows that He recognized that a crisis in His career had arrived. For Peter's declaration, at its heart, meant this: that upon him (Peter) the personality of Jesus had shone as the embodiment of all that Peter conceived Ideal Man to be. The Messiah—the Christ—was not to Peter one servant of God among many: He was the sole fulfiller of all the others' lack of service: He was to be God's thought realized. This Peter saw in Jesus, and Jesus knew that what Peter saw that day humanity would come to see in the days that were to be. The seed would grow: already Jesus saw the Church of Peter's fellow-confessors rising strong and indestructible.

It was, therefore, a great moment in our Lord's career: in its own way a real consummation. Man had been shown what man should be. The Ideal had been "evidently set forth."

But the consummation, on its other side, meant, alas! only a new beginning. Man needed more than the vision, in flesh, of the Ideal realized: he needed the enablement to realize the Ideal for himself. But how could this enablement be procured for him? Jesus knew that could only be by a contest, even to the death, with the things that keep man back. "From that time

forth," accordingly we read, "from that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples how that He must go unto Jerusalem *and suffer*."

The disciples, and especially Peter, were appalled at this new departure. "What! The perfect picture to be marred? God's own Anointed to be buffeted and slain?" The thought was sacrilege to Peter's mind, as yet so little knowing what it costs to save. But Jesus knew the inexorable truth, and because His disciples could not then understand nor help Him, He went up the mountainside to commune with God, and so be braced for the dread work before Him. It was then, at that hour of consummation and of reconsecration, that the unsought transfiguration took place.

There is something peculiarly welcome in the statement that Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John. That act of His looked back to the confession of Peter, and onward to the work of these men in the Church. It was right that they should understand more of what was implied in the name "Christ," and be witnesses of the origin, in the heights of Godhead, of Christ's saving work. And when Christ's prayer on the hilltop drew Him, as prayer always does, into communion with the great souls who had preceded Him in the service of God: when they saw their Master's true relation to the

prophets, to some of whom the half-seeing crowds had compared Him: and when, as He prayed, presenting Himself to the Father in the perfection of His unstained manhood, and the old law, "Do this and thou shalt live," came into its highest operation, and the glory of a higher mode of existence began to bud upon His person, the three wondering men, and humanity through them, received a liberal education in the issues and possibilities of human life, and in the majestic laws of the spiritual kingdom. Their Master stood, in the completeness of His purity, yet very man, at the gate of heaven; and the gate swung back to await His pleasure and the glory from within shone upon Him. Who does not see in this the Heavenly Pattern of the zenith of universal aspirant life?

But there was a higher revelation still for these men and for us to see. As Christ's spiritual communion proceeded it became evident that His mind was occupied not so much with the present glory as with the future issues of His work. Moses and Elijah—so ran the ancient story—had passed painlessly into the offered glory, but had left their work unfinished, an exodus unaccomplished: Christ meditated a sterner choice. The heavenly glory already all but enveloped Him, the heavenly communion drew His stainless soul; but down below, the earth, its sin and its sorrow summoned Him also.

Which way should He take? The open way to heaven, which was His by right, or the dolorous way to the Cross?

The paroxysm of the momentous choice was hidden from His disciples; but when the blinding glory had passed, and they were alone once more with Jesus, the calm of victory was already on His brow. He had closed the open gate of heaven, and now came down to tread the "pathway of shadows." He was beginning a new career, and for it He had been baptized, not as for the first, in the river with water, but on the hill with fire.

This is the great Renunciation of the Christ. Now see how it completes the renunciations made at the Temptation in the wilderness. There He had refused, when offered for Himself alone, "the kingdoms of this world and all the glory of them": now He puts from Him the Kingdom of Heaven itself. His self-abnegation is now shown to be proof against not only the appeals of sense, of ambition, and of the earthly spirit: the love in Him is stronger even than "the attraction of heaven for the most heavenly mind."

And in all this progression of choices surely Christ's experience outlines the process of the moral advance of the universal human soul.

On every plane of life temptation to swift self-realization and self-glorification presses upon

us. On the physical plane the temptation swiftly to end our "hunger" by instant self-gratification and to keep for ourselves our wealth, power and resource is notorious and insistent. On the intellectual plane the temptation is no less real and much more subtle: to keep for ourselves, not for useful ends, but for ends of pleasure and self-inflation, our knowledge and attainments. How many men have heard the whisper which the French poet has put into the lips of the Tempter, "*Sois savant et sois seul!*"

But there is a more subtle and intimate temptation still. It is to keep our religion and its rewards to ourselves: to choose the luxury and rest of communion before the ardours of unselfish work: to suffer ourselves to be bathed in premature glory while humanity remains unsaved: to cherish subtle egoism even in our holy things. The exclusiveness and the inertness of the Churches in all ages are both the record of this temptation's triumph. A premature heaven is harder to renounce than an inviting earth. When Guatama sat under the Bô tree fighting his way to enlightenment he nearly missed his goal, the legend says, through this temptation. The grosser temptations one by one had been conquered, when there came the subtle whisper, "Thou hast done all; enter Nirvana now!" But a fluttering in the branches of the tree above

him recalled the Buddha to the needs of the creation around him, and he refused the summons to Nirvana. It is but a poor adumbration of the refusal our Lord made for us: that He might save us, and that we might learn that there is need at the heart of human life for a renunciation of the heavenly as well as of the earthly.

Let us recall, then, the representative, and in that sense "universal" element in the great crises of Christ's life so far. We have seen how in His baptism He foreheralded the threshold experience of every consecrated life the world over. We have seen how in the Temptation in the wilderness, are set forth the principles which must everywhere govern, and the suggestions which must everywhere be resisted by, the man who would rightly use his God-given powers. And now in the Transfiguration, or, rather, in that sublime moral choice which lies at its heart, and is reflected in the lustreless solitude in which Jesus was seen by His disciples in the early dawn, there on that mountain top of devotion Christ fought out the battle which sooner or later comes to every man: in which the self-life is driven forth even from its most intimate fastness—the place of religious communion. And by His victory here Christ has pointed the way as no other has done to the only possible solution of the riddle of this painful earth.

VIII

THE WITNESS OF HIS TEACHING

WHEN the constables of the ecclesiastical police on one occasion refused to arrest Jesus, they explained to their angry superiors that they had been paralyzed by His utterances, the like of which they had never heard. "Never man," they said with emphasis, "spake like this Man." The involuntary exclamation of amazement has long since become the deliberate judgement of the better part of mankind. Christ's mind has come to dominate the human intellect as no other single mind has done. In religion He is very generally acknowledged to be the Greatest Teacher the world has seen.

It is greatly to be regretted, however, that by those who concede this position to Jesus it is not more generally seen that the uniqueness of His teaching, alike in its substance and in its effect, is a witness to the uniqueness of His Person,—and not merely to the eminence of the equipment of His Person in gifts and graces, but to an interpretation of His Person which involves "the supernatural," *i. e.*, affirms His immediate Divine origin, His present-day residence in God, and His conscious occupation now of a unique

saving relation to universal man. It is by no means uncommon to hear men in these days express in one breath their admiration for the "teaching of Jesus," and their inability to believe in "the Divinity of Christ." Such an attitude is not permanently tenable, and can only mean that the logical issue of the admiration of His teaching has not been perceived. Only let the teaching, so generally, but vaguely, admired, be closely studied in its range, its characteristic qualities, and its known results, and the student will be inevitably driven from the teaching onward to the personality of the Teacher, and will find it impossible to credit the extinction of that personality: he will find it infinitely more reasonable to believe (however he may dislike the somewhat infelicitous word "Divinity") that Jesus is to-day alive, dwelling in fullness of life and power, the conscious Oversoul and spiritual guide of universal mankind.

I wish in this chapter to recall at least one aspect of this indissoluble connection between Christ's teaching and His Person: to show not only that the spaciousness of His mind is reflected in the broad catholicity of His teaching, but that the teaching in its matter and result exhibits Christ as the living and abiding centre of the life of universal man.

Let us begin by recalling the impression made upon His contemporaries by the utterances of

Jesus. In the Gospel of Luke an account is given of what must have been one of Christ's earliest public appearances as a teacher, when in the synagogue of Nazareth on a Sabbath day He gave a religious address, which was also an outline of the programme of His mission. According to the story, the effects produced upon the audience were extraordinarily diverse. During the first part of the discourse the people were spellbound by the benignity of the message, and responded by thrilled applause. "All bare Him witness and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of His mouth; and they said, 'Is not this Joseph's son?'" It cannot be straining the meaning of these words too far to say that they imply a double impression: a startled response to the charm of the message, and a bewildered admiration of the gifts of the speaker. But scarcely had this effect manifested itself when another, very different, appeared. As the discourse proceeded, and it became evident that the "words of grace" and the deeds of kindly ministry by which they were supported were meant to have no local or national limitations, the proud provincial selfishness of the audience asserted itself with extraordinary vehemence; and in a paroxysm of anger the congregation rose *en masse*, and thrusting the young Teacher out of the building would have done Him to death had they not been cowed by His personal

dignity and calmness. The incident furnishes abundant evidence of the astonishing sway Jesus held from the beginning of His career over the emotions of men; and it is noticeable that the emotions at first called forth were those of fascination and admiration, and that it was only when the Teacher began to show how He proposed to put His teaching into practice—in other words, to connect the teaching in its issue with Himself—it was then that the sudden revulsion of feeling supervened, the discourse having had its full effect in striking home upon the pride of the hearers a blow which roused their worst passions. Here, then, is the characteristic effect of Christ's utterances as exhibited from the first by the behaviour of His contemporaries: *the word smote*. Again and again we read afterwards in the story of the delight and fascination which the people showed on hearing the hope-bringing good news which Jesus proclaimed: more than once we find evidence of their astonishment at His gifts, marveling at His wisdom and learning, and ranking Him with the greater prophets; but behind all we read that, as the messenger's meaning became better understood the deepest impression made was not on the people's affections or imaginations, but on their *conscience*: they were not so much attracted or astonished as discovered and convicted: the outstanding note of the teach-

ing was *power*. "He spake as one having authority."

Now, though excerpts only from the teaching of Jesus have come down to us, enough remains to enable us to penetrate some way into the secret of this unique impression of power. We are considerably helped by the significant fact that the teaching has been preserved to us not in series of aphorisms detached from surroundings of time and place, not in treatises professing to record Jesus' words and nothing but His words, but always in a setting and surrounded by a background of incident which often helps to define the meaning of the teaching, and always heightens its interest.

First of all, the subjects on which Jesus spoke invariably bore upon what directly touched the people's deepest needs and interests. Carlyle somewhere bewails the fact that the preaching and teaching function so necessary in itself has so failed of fruit because the preacher's subjects have so often been remote from the central needs of man—"if he (the preacher) could but find the point again!" Christ had "found the point" of human need and perplexity, and every word He spoke hit the mark. He spoke of sin and announced a credible pardon, thus addressing Himself to what is perennially the bitterest of all human troubles: He spoke of the cares and distresses of daily life, unveiling the fretful and

selfish anxieties which run under the current of men's lawful enterprises, and pointing the way to a simple, unharassed life: He spoke of the homely virtues, of ailments in character, of the preciousness of opportunity: He spoke of the human soul, of its rights, its worth even in the most degraded and self-despairing, its responsibilities, its possibilities, and the issues which may lie before it: He spoke confidently and convincingly of God as Father and an accessible Spirit, so answering and satisfying the deepest Godward craving in men; and He dwelt most of all on God's holy and gracious purposes for mankind in the establishment of the "Kingdom of God," a condition of things in which all unrighteousness would be done away, and man would be reunited to man and brought into fellowship with God in a life governed by love, and indestructible by death.

And all this Jesus set forth not in the language of the schools, nor as having acquired the knowledge by strenuous effort, nor as suggestion or hypothesis; but with the quiet ease and naïve directness of one who is perfectly at home in his subject, and for the most part in beautiful similes and parables in which the people saw reflected as in a mirror, not only the external scenes and incidents, but the varying moods and projects of their daily existence. It is not to be wondered at that this absolute mastery of fun-

damental truth—and a man must be a master of his subject if he is able to set it forth in parabolic form—this unfailingly accurate and self-evidencing exposure of facts as they are, this terrifyingly intimate acquaintance with man, and scarcely less terrifying familiarity with the Unseen, this ministry at once of judgment and of good hope,—it is not to be wondered at that this should cause to fall upon the people an impression of being in the presence of unexampled power and authority.

But that authority they could not and did not attach to the words of the Teacher, but to the Teacher Himself. He was indeed inseparable from His teaching; it was part of Him: He gave it its astounding weight and force. It was not simply that they saw in Him the supreme illustration of what He taught: it is a poor thing to say of Jesus now, and I believe it would have been thought by His contemporaries to be a small thing to say of Him then, that He “practised what He preached.” He was felt not simply to incarnate the ideal He proclaimed, *but to be the source of the ideal*, the Lord of the realm of the truth about life, the judge of men. It was His *eyes* as much as His words that smote men, as it was His touch as much as His word that healed them: it was His *presence* that made men feel they were now at the naked centre of things where no subterfuge was possible: so from

His words to Himself moved inevitably the minds of His contemporaries. And as time went on, alike with foe and friend, what He was and did fascinated even more than what He said. His enemies could give no rational account of what He had taught; but they felt the judgment of His presence and hated Him for His very goodness. His own Apostles, whose thoughts of Him are preserved for our guidance in the Apostolic letters, almost never quote from His teaching: they are absorbed in the significance of His Person.

And Jesus Himself not only took no pains to avoid this result, but deliberately drew the people's thoughts and the response of their hearts to Himself, showing Himself sensitive about their verdict on Him, and asking not simply for their assent to His statements, but for their attachment to His person and entire submission to His will. The egoism of all this has to be reckoned with much more seriously than is sometimes done by men who profess to accept Jesus as Teacher while denying Him as Lord. The self-assertion of Christ is either a serious blot on His character or an integral part of a gracious and deliberate saving purpose of God. Jesus knew that the hold He was gaining upon men was not upon their intellects alone, but upon their whole selves: and He put forth His strength to maintain that hold, and in men's own interest to fasten them to Himself.

For this He would even die : to this end He did die, "that He might be Lord" : "I, if I be lifted up from the earth," He said, "will draw all men unto Myself."

And if now we turn from Jesus' life on earth to His work in history, we see the same movement from the teaching to the Person. As I have said, the Apostles rarely quote His teaching, but dwell on the power and eminence of His Person : they do not speak of the "gigantic intellect" of Jesus, but of His royal place in the spiritual world, as controlling principalities and powers : they do not speak of His "catholic mind," it is His personality that has become somehow so spacious, so world-embracing that they are able to coin the daring phrase "*in Christ*," and to declare that it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.

And from the Apostles' time to our own the characteristic work of Jesus has been not the development of wisdom and learning (though He has done that, too), but the creation of personalities : the discovery and reintegration of broken or undeveloped lives and their upbuilding into strength and effectiveness. No leader of men, no philosopher or teacher, no "religious genius" has any fraction of the record which Jesus has of bringing out into the arena of human life and into the forefront of human progress strong personalities—outstanding, heroic, free. And the

strength of these men and women has not been their knowledge, but their love. What most of them knew their love taught them. None of them have understood His teaching thoroughly, but they loved Him with a love that was thorough, and that made them the men and women they became.

It is an inversion of the whole facts, then, to speak of Jesus as if He were chiefly a religious teacher. What we have to deal with in Him is, not first or chiefly, His teaching, but, first and chiefly, His Person: a Person transcending the limits of earthly life, and of time and space, and race and language; a Person attesting itself alive and in power by the work it does in creating persons made new and made strong by love. Concede the present day life of the Person and His consciousness of man as coextensive with man's life, and the peculiar vitality of His teaching while on earth becomes intelligible; its singular freedom from all that would be hampering local and provincial in its setting takes on new meaning, and we begin to understand why the gospel has so wonderfully acclimatized itself in all lands, and why Christendom is already the one truly cosmopolitan State.

"Heaven and earth shall pass away," said Jesus with amazing confidence, "but My words shall not pass away." And again, "All authority is given unto Me in heaven and earth: go ye

therefore and teach all nations ; and lo ! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

As the centuries pass it becomes increasingly evident that the sublime confidence of Jesus was justified. His words endure, because He endures. His words spread themselves over the earth and make disciples among all nations, because He lives, the Oversoul of the universal human spirit, the Answer to all its questionings, the Representative and Reservoir of its desires and hopes—the one Word that the wistful heart of universal man longs to utter to its God, and the Eternal Word of God to man.

IX

THE WITNESS OF HIS PRAYERS

WE would fain have possessed more instances than we have of the prayers of Jesus, for those we do possess reveal not only a quite unique conception of and relation to God, but a unique comprehension of the life of man. It is to be assumed that a sincere man's outlook and disposition are never so fully disclosed as when he is overheard at prayer. If this be so, then the self-disclosures of Jesus as they deepen in intimacy certainly deepen in mystery. His prayers reveal a personality whose affluence in "correspondences" with the spiritual world and with all that is deepest in the life of universal man remain a perpetual astonishment; and to the close student of these prayers the suggestion is almost irresistible that their author sustained, and still sustains, some such unique relation to the human race as the phrase the "Universality of Jesus" is meant to shadow forth.

Besides fragmentary echoes of the ejaculatory prayers of Jesus, two longer utterances have come down to us, distinguished from the others by their completeness and their fullness, and both illustrate the suggestion of origin in a mind sin-

gularly aware of man's generic life. These prayers are "the Lord's prayer" and the truly-named "High-priestly" prayer, reported in John 17. It is true that we have no conclusive evidence that Jesus ever adopted the first of these prayers as His own: it was a liturgical model composed by Him for His friends in response to a request for guidance in praying. But we may take it as an illustration of His view of prayer—of what its subjects should be, and what its range and manner; and thus regarded, it easily takes the first place among extant expressions of the religious idea in man. It has become not merely the one universal prayer of Christendom: it has appealed to the most enlightened exponents of other faiths, and has been repeated in unison at a representative Parliament of Religions. This result is all the more astounding if, as some scholars have declared, no single petition of the prayer was in the strict sense "original," the startling originality being in the structure of the prayer. Within the narrow framework of an utterance containing only half a dozen petitions Jesus has gathered all the deepest necessities of the collective and individual life of mankind, and has so knit together and built up these petitions in orderly sequence that the prayer as a whole appeals to men everywhere, and remains to any man who will thoughtfully use it a liberal education in sympathy with mankind and in under-

standing the character of God. 'To begin with, a man is bidden postpone the outpouring of his private needs till he has related himself aright to the needs of the world: the first three petitions of the Lord's prayer are "missionary" intercessions, which when a man begins to use, at once narrowness and possible selfishness of outlook are checked, and the sympathies spread out to take in the wants that lie deepest in the life of universal man. "Our Father which art in heaven,—Hallowed be Thy name"—hallowed, that is, the whole world over. What a sweep of intercessory affection, what enlightening recollection of what the world most truly needs, what readjustment to fraternal fellowship of desire lies behind the intelligent use of this petition alone! It means that one sees, instructed by Christ, that the profoundest necessity for the broken and sundered lives of our race is reunion in spiritual religion, in one universal reverence to one worthy thought of God: and to go on intelligently to pray, "Thy kingdom come: Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" is to desire (and surely also to be moved to work for) the reorganizing of man's broken life on the basis of a universal subordination to God, orderly and loyal, because willing, enlightened and free. Think of the power that lies in a series of intercessions like that *to educate the intercessor* in the true meaning and inwardness of the history behind him and being made around

him! Think of its stores of impulse to a cosmopolitan outlook; its potent force as a solvent of the parochial spirit! And then think of the range and depth of the insight of the "Galilæan peasant" who thus perceived and read the universal needs of man! How came He to have those eyes which, like God's, "are over all the earth"? And the rest of the prayer is no less marvellous as a transcript of the cry of the world-wide heart of man. "Give us this day our daily bread,"—*give* us, for we can neither manufacture, nor for very long so much as store the raw material of life's nourishment: "forgive us our debts"—*forgive*, for we can neither pay for, expiate nor endure unexpiated the irreparable past: "deliver us from evil"—for that is the deep-set root of all our woes. Is it not the unanimous voice of mankind that sighs through these petitions? Has there ever been so perfect, so adequate an articulation of the murmur of the hungering world-soul? Is prayer for more than this prayer includes essential? Would prayer for less be less than vicious? Men vary in their power of calling up from the sub-conscious region the thoughts and sympathies that wander to the farthest frontiers of personality and seem to travel even beyond; but this is more than telepathy *in excelsis*: it is a knowledge of universal man gathering itself in such a way within the compass of a single mind that the inference is irresistible

that this Man's consciousness was more than "individual," and that these things He had learned in some residence in God antedating His residence on earth. The vast sweep of the Lord's prayer, and its astounding grasp of what is deepest in the necessities of the world in every age, go far to make credible even the saying attributed to Christ in the fourth gospel, "Before Abraham was, I am."

A detailed examination of the other most fully-reported specimen of Jesus' prayers—the "High-priestly" prayer in John 17—is, of course, less possible here even than an adequate study of the briefer model; but perhaps there is no segment of New Testament literature more earnestly to be commended to the student of the mystery of Christ. Even a single alert and careful reading of it brings one at once into the presence of a mind looking out upon human life from a unique point of view, and with unique understanding and sympathy interpreting man's need. Let me suggest a method of study capable of detailed application at leisure, and fitted to bring clearly into our view some of the wonders of this great utterance.

The three deepest subjects of human thought—the categories within which our consideration of "all that is" must move are these: First, God; next, the interpretation and conduct of the indi-

vidual life; finally, the interpretation of the course of the world's life. Test the High-priestly prayer of Jesus by its treatment of these great subjects of human thought, and you will find that, though obviously in the utterance of the prayer no ordered exposition of any one of them was at all in view, all three are dealt with as they have never been before or since by a mind possessing the "inwardness of the East and the clear incisiveness of the West," and that beyond the treatment given of them in this passage the human mind has never yet advanced.

1. Try to realize the conception of *God* underlying this prayer. From the names by which God is addressed, from the requests laid before Him in language trustful and sure, from the posture of the spirit of the author of the prayer as revealed in the natural and unembarrassed flow of the thought—from all these things one may gather something of the idea of God that lay in the speaker's mind. God is addressed as a Father, Holy and Righteous; He is entreated, in terms clearly indicating the belief in His power and willingness, to protect from evil and to perfect in character, and, despite the alienations of space and time and temper, to bring together in a unity of faith those for whom the prayer intercedes; His love is leaned upon in absolute confidence, and declared to wrap around as in a divine caress the manifold life of man. It is essentially

the same conception of God as in smaller compass shines through the "Lord's prayer": here as there, *God* is the Father of us all, exalted in holiness over us, yet delighting in the sins of men, solicitous for the interests of goodness among men, yet careful of human freedom, not despising men's daily life, but watching and guiding their individual and collective progress: companion of their waywardness, angel of their vicissitudes; concerned chiefly that they be rescued from evil and become an organized host of His reverent and willing sons, serving Him in gladness, seeing His face.

Magnificent and solitary out of the dust of the ages rises this sublime conception of God, in which He is related to every—the widest—human need and interest and hope: whence came this miraculously extended consciousness of *man* in the mind of Christ, that formed the base for this stupendous structure?

2. And when we turn from the thought of God in the prayer to the reflection it conveys of Christ's mind upon the ideals and uses of the individual life, the same instinct for the universal and the ultimate impresses us. Take this illustration in the sphere of personal religion: "All Mine are Thine and Thine are Mine, and I am glorified in them [sc. My friends]." Have we appreciated the depth of these words? There are two poles between which must move our ideas of the

individual man's relation to God ; these are self-dedication to God and appropriation of God. When these are in experience realized in perfection then the summit of the mystical life has been reached. And if to this be added the uttermost of love for man, a love so complete that one's thought of oneself, of one's career, one's success, is merged in it, then surely *religion* on its ethical as well as its mystical side has found its completest possible individual expression. But how could all this be more succinctly gathered together than in the words, "All Mine are Thine and Thine are Mine, and I am glorified in these My brethren" ? Surely here the final norm of personal religion in universal man has found its last expression.

Or, take an illustration or two of Christ's mind on the uses of the individual life. He reports Himself to His Father as having carried out the work appointed to Him, and He is blessed in having no regrets, no remorse, no repinings over lost or wasted opportunity. In what spirit, then, had He lived ? First of all, in a spirit of self-abnegating witness to the character of God : "I have glorified Thee on the earth ; I have manifested Thy name." Next, in a spirit of affectionate solicitude for men, seeking to guard them within the holy precincts of the influence of the Divine character : "I have guarded these men within Thy Name." Next, in a spirit of eager-

ness to mediate what He knew of God, and what of God's mind He daily lived on: "I have given them Thy word." How simple the words sound! Yet how fathomless they are! Is man's conception of what his life might be made ever likely to rise higher than this thought—of a life lived in the daily repression of egoism and the glorifying of God; of a life lived in kindest interest in one's fellows, especially manifesting itself in the desire to surround them with the moral protection of the Holy Name; of a life transmitting without timidities, without error, without adulteration the spiritual messages from the Eternal which have been the breath of its own existence? It is not along these lines that we who have writhed under the disgraces of our own vanity, hard selfishness and dumbness in testimony would fain live if we could? How comes it that this Jesus of Nazareth speaks thus for *us* out here in the West, and so far apart from Him in time?

3. And when finally we move out from His thoughts of the individual life to His view of the world and of the meaning of history, our wonder at the range of His vision becomes a kind of stupefaction. No less than sixteen times in the course of this prayer does the word "world" appear, so catholic were the interests of Jesus the Nazarene. At no time in His public life had the local and temporary been obtruded, rather they

had been subordinated; here, as He gives His life up to the Father, they fall away altogether, and He reveals Himself consciously related to the wide world, its deep spiritual necessities and its highest hopes. "O righteous Father," He sadly reports, "the world hath not known Thee." *It was true*—true for East and West, for farthest China, for Greece, for Rome, for Northern Europe. We know that now, but *how did He know then?* "The world hath not known Thee, but I have known Thee, and these" [His more intimate friends] "have known"—not even Thee, but—"that Thou hast sent Me." It was an absolutely accurate statement of the position and prospects at that moment of a right understanding of God among men. We see that clearly enough now; but, again, *how did He know then?* And this knowledge of God, of which He thus claimed a monopoly, yet longed to share with mankind—how was it to be spread abroad? By the presence in the world of a community of faith united by the bond of a common life in God and by its unity perpetually witnessing to the world of the reality and the character of God His Father; in other words, He foreshadows the stupendous idea of the Catholic Church, and forecasts with—as we now can see—the most perfect accuracy the nature of that spiritual influence by which alone the reunifying of the scattered fragments of humanity can be brought about. He reads the

needs of the world through His love of the world, and writes beforehand the essentials of its history in His prayerful desires.

And even beyond what we can think of as history His mind sweeps. Back into the darkness of the "eternity of origins" He penetrates, and sees Love active at the beginning of things: as an account of the remotest beginnings of human life is anything essential left unsaid in the memorable utterance, "Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world"? And when from the "eternity of origins" to the "eternity of issues" His thought travels, again it is unto the triumph of Love He sees things moving through the unfolding of the true character of God: "I have declared unto them Thy name and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

This Man carries the world in His heart. Overhearing this prayer, uttered within twenty-four hours of the sacrifice on Calvary, we know we are standing by the high altar of the world. And it is incredible that a universe-embracing knowledge and love like this should have no deeper roots than the mortal life of a mere man afford, or that so vast a volume of intercessory desire should be confined within the limits of that mortal life, or by death suffer extinction or arrest. *This Man*, because He abideth forever, hath His

priesthood unchangeable. "For such a High Priest became us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separate from sinners and *made higher than the heavens*—a Son, perfected for evermore."

X

THE WITNESS OF HIS DEATH

IN the earliest Christian literature—the New Testament epistles—Calvary is never once mentioned. The death of Christ is the central fact in these writings—is, indeed, largely the reason for their existence—yet the story of that death is never once retold as we should tell of a recent occurrence, dwelling on the details of its local setting. The crucifixion of Jesus was an event less than forty years old when these letters were written; yet already its local and temporal background had faded out of view, and its universal import had filled the field of vision. The death of Christ was not dated by local calendar: itself remade all calendars, and marked an era for the world. “Once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself,” such is the manner of writing, in the epistles, about the death of Jesus. The universal reference is assumed: the world itself is conceived as the broad base of the altar on which Christ was sacrificed.

This swift outspreading of men’s thoughts regarding an historical occurrence is without parallel in human history; and one asks, “What

is there about the death of Jesus that accounts for this early interpretation of it as a death on behalf of, and having results reaching out to, all mankind ? ” The question is important, for this early interpretation of Christ’s death does not stand alone. It has been characteristic of the gospel of Jesus wherever it has been made known, that the story of the death has carried with it its own self-evidencing universality of application. Whatever else in Jesus men have been indifferent to, they have not failed to feel that His death meant something for them : the story of the Cross has been “ in all countries and among all races of men the penetrating point by which Christian truth has pierced the prejudice and callousness of heathenism.” There must be “ universal elements entangled ” in a death which has thus everywhere lent itself to one explanation, and touched with lonely power the springs of penitence and hope in the hearts of men of the most diverse races, traditions and temperaments. Can we discover what some of these elements are ?

Let us, to begin with, be sure that we rightly apprehend the dimensions of the event as an incident in Jewish history.

It is no doubt true that the murder of Jesus was, under one aspect, simply a case of miscarriage of justice in a province of the Roman Empire, and it is not wonderful that the incident

should occupy little or no space in the secular histories of the period. But when we look more closely into the antecedents of Jesus and into the place He occupies in Jewish history, we begin to see that the incident of His death refuses to shrink to the dimensions of an ordinary execution, even though it were the unjust execution of an innocent man.

The Jewish people had for centuries been the subjects of a special politico-religious discipline having for its aim their equipment as the bearers of religious truth to all mankind. Plain across the face of their national history is written this providential design, and, indeed, to this day the finest spirits in Israel recognize that religion is the true *raison d'être* of the Jew. Unhappily the Jews in the centuries before Christ did not all take kindly to this conception of their mission as a nation, and even maltreated their prophets who dared to insist upon it; and they and their national history became more and more secularized, religion surviving amongst them, for the most part, in a perverted, frigid and exclusive form. Here and there, no doubt, were to be found instances of fervent and enlightened piety, and of prayerful hope that Israel's mission would yet be fulfilled under the leadership of the promised "Messias"; but the nation, as a whole, was formal in religion and secular in political outlook. As a consequence, the very roots of Israel's separateness

among the nations were being destroyed, and absorption in the surrounding Gentilism was drawing near. Just then appeared Jesus, "of the house and lineage of David," offering Himself as Messiah, "a leader and commander to the people." Jesus had no political designs against Rome: His aim was to enable His people to rise, if it might yet be, to the height of their mission as God's apostles of saving truth to the world. Accordingly He set out, not by recruiting for an armed rebellion, but by "preaching, teaching and healing." He expounded the first principles which He conceived lay at the heart of the ancient Jehovah-religion which the Jews were meant to teach the world; He summoned His people to return in penitence to these first principles, and by a number of symbolic acts of power He illustrated the effects which the acceptance of these principles would produce in the world, and sketched in miniature the programme of the Kingdom of God. Having done so much, He offered Himself formally to the people as their Messiah, and not to the people only, but to the people's official religious leaders.

The reply to His overtures was definite and unmistakable. It took the form of a determined hostility, culminating in the compassing of His death. He was arraigned before a court representing the ecclesiastical, civil and intellectual authority among the people, and was, after trial,

deliberately handed over to the Romans to be crucified. His death, then, was the national rejection of Him as Messiah: a rejection made by the people, as a whole, through their official representatives. And the circumstances of the rejection were such as to involve, in a most dramatic way, Israel's formal abdication of its special religious mission. The Roman governor, Pilate, to whom Jesus had been delivered for crucifixion, and who hated and despised the Jews, could not resist the opportunity to gratify his scorn and irritate the Jewish leaders by an ironic scene. He knew the Jews' explanation of their vacant throne—that they were waiting for the heaven-sent theocratic King. He resolved to tease and infuriate them by letting them see in mockery a Jew upon the vacant throne. His soldiers had plaited a crown of thorns and put it on Jesus' head, and dressed Him in a robe of imperial purple, and put a wand, by way of sceptre, in His hand. He had now all the insignia of royalty, except the throne. This Pilate provided in his own judicial chair. Placing Jesus upon the chair,¹ Pilate turned to the people, and said, "Behold, your King!" The answer was the announcement of a nation's doom: "We have no King but Cæsar." Israel had abandoned her hopes and her mission.

¹ In John 19: 13, "sat down" should be read "set Him (*i. e.*, Jesus) down."

The death that was the occasion of such a revelation of a people's apostasy from God was obviously the instrument of a momentous moral judgment. And so it soon began to be felt. Within a few weeks after the death a vast crowd in Jerusalem was made to shiver with horror and remorseful fear, on the simple narration of the facts by one of the followers of Jesus. But the nation as a whole was impenitent; it had made its choice, and finally; and in a few years the inevitable *debâcle* came, in the horrors of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem.

We cannot ignore all this in estimating what one may call the original dimensions of the death of Jesus; the documents make it perfectly clear that this thought of His death as a national rejection of an offered Messiah, and of a last moral opportunity, was clearly before the minds of the earliest interpreters of the death. From the very beginning, therefore, the death was recognized as having not simply a national (Jewish) import, but as marking a fatal crisis in Jewish history.

But there was another element at work in building up a belief in the still wider effects and significance of Jesus' death. That new element was the impression of the uniqueness of His character. As men looked back upon His life and demeanour, as a whole, it seemed an astounding

thing not only that men should have hated Him as they did, but that He should at all have come under the power of death. His spotless holiness had been itself a terrible judgment upon the defections of Israel, and, indeed, farther afield: Rome no less than Israel had been judged in Him, and equally the ideals of Greece had been put to shame before the new revelations of goodness given in Him—the marvels not merely of His self-control, but of His love and self-sacrifice. That such an one, the Holy and the Just, should have been slain was indeed an unparalleled discovery of human sinfulness, and every tender spirit felt the shaming solidarity of men in sin as the facts were told; but was the death not something more? As men recalled His life on earth, His teachings and His warnings, certain sayings of His which at the time He spoke them had seemed hopeless riddles began to gain some clearness. He had *foreseen* His rejection and death: had predicted that it would come; and yet He had made no serious attempt to escape it; nay, had declared it all to be part of God's plan, had implicated God in this, as in all else within His career. What could it mean? Was this mysterious death of the Holy and Just One, then, somehow the act of God? It was understood that the indignation of God must go forth against the men who slew Jesus—and yet would this alone

fit all the facts? Had not Jesus said, "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life"? Could there, then, be in God something higher and greater even than His indignation against evil—some design to make the very revelation of human sin the occasion of the revelation of a Divine appeal? What if the death were not defeat, but a Divine triumph—the Messiah by it accomplishing far more than Israel could ever have accomplished, proclaiming a message of salvation to all mankind, revealing a God suffering under the grief of human sin, and bearing in His heart sin's penalty, and at this cost holding open the offer of forgiveness and return to Him?

So the world-shaking thought took hold of human minds, that as behind the life of Christ they had felt the movement of the life of God, so now behind His death was the suffering and the redeeming love of God. And this thought once taking root in men's minds, lo! the news of Christ's death sped forth a message to Jew and Gentile—a message burning to make itself known wherever sinful men were found. For there is no wider need among mankind than the need of a pardoning Love: whatsoever speaks of such a love in God, speaks in the one tongue the universal human heart can comprehend: and it is because this message lay at the heart of the death of Christ —

“O heart I made, a Heart beats here !
Face My hands fashioned, see it in Myself !
Thou hast no power nor may'st conceive of Mine,
But love I gave thee, with Myself to love.
And thou must love Me, who have died for thee !”

it is because this message lay at the heart of the death of Christ that men of all races have recognized that the death was *for them*. There is no evidence, like the witness of His death, to the Universality of Jesus: for it is His death that supremely attests the all-embracing and invincible love of God.

XI

THE WITNESS OF HIS RESURRECTION

IN this series of studies, now nearing its close, I have been endeavouring to illustrate, by a reference to salient points in His career, the conception of Jesus Christ as the Representative Man, the Incarnation of the incorrupt idea of humanity. Now an integral part of the records of the career of Jesus on earth is a section of the narrative based on the allegation that three days after His death He rose from the dead and remained for some time intermittently visible by His friends, holding conversation with them and even eating in their presence, before He finally left the world. This resurrection narrative is, whatever may be said to the contrary, absolutely without parallel in literature: if it be true, it transcends in interest and significance any series of facts known to man: if it be false, it remains the most depressing tantalization extant of human hopes, for it leaves the darkness which binds our lives absolutely unbroken. What are we to do with this narrative, so puzzling and so difficult to believe? May it not be possible that the idea which we have used as the key to the explanation of some of Christ's

earlier experiences will help us to understand this section of the story, that the thought of His universality may throw some light upon the story of His resurrection?

At first sight it seems absurd to project the idea of a Representative Typical Man into a region beyond human experience—the allegation that Christ went through a post-mortem experience which certainly no other man before or since has gone through would seem to shatter the conception of Him as the Representative of Universal Man. But when we look more closely into the matter, we see that the truth is just the other way round. No man can represent the perfect flower of what is best, though only budding, in humanity, who has not in his experience somewhat which answers to the intimations that are within men of a close relation to a larger world and life. For these intimations are an integral part of the equipment of universal man. They are in alliance with the best that is in us—it is in our highest and most moral moments that we are most conscious of our affinity to a wider and higher life. Whosoever therefore would represent the essential idea of man must somehow bring this fact of relationship with the higher world within his experience.

Now this is precisely what the resurrection of Christ does. It is a revelation of a wider life than we men have experienced, but not of a

wider than we have wished for, and can conceive ourselves possessing. It is a revelation of life under quite unexampled conditions, but it is a revelation of a distinctly human life, and of one which we feel answers to what we can conceive as the completion of our here imperfect lives.

We shall see this better if we recall the story. Now we do not possess any account of the actual resurrection itself. No human eye is even alleged to have witnessed that: and no description of it is attempted in the memoirs of Jesus. What we do possess is an account of what was visible in His tomb three days after His death, together with a series of incidents of His alleged appearance to His friends. When we read these incidents, however, it soon becomes evident to us that a quite new fact is being set forth before us. It is quite evidently not a case of resuscitation merely, even from actual death. The resuscitation of Jesus, after having been three days in the grave, would have been a sufficiently astonishing thing, and difficult of belief. But the story would not have been without precedent. The old Hebrew legends had told of men who had come back to life after a much longer period than three days in the tomb: and even in the memoirs of Jesus Himself there are stories of His bringing about such

resuscitations. One of these cases was that of His friend Lazarus, whom He is stated to have revived after four days in the grave. Now that story may or may not be true; but the point to notice is that either way, it is in no sense a parallel to the story of Christ's resurrection. We are not, it is true, told much about Lazarus' after life: but so far as the records go, there is nothing to show that he was in any essential respect different from what he had been before his gruesome adventure. He returned apparently with the same powers and the same limitations, to the old life and to the old relationships and to the experience of decay and of a second "death." That is all that is even alleged about Lazarus. But what is said about Jesus Himself is wholly different. The disciples are uniformly represented to have been amazed and awed, not simply by the fact of His reappearance—He had Himself repeatedly foretold to them that after three days He would reappear—but by the manner of His reappearance. He came to them in bodily form, in a body bearing the marks of His crucifixion, and yet altered utterly. For one thing, the body possessed new and unheard of powers, or rather, was independent in a new and unheard of way, of earthly limitations. It passes through closed doors: it is found present rather than arrives: it vanishes rather than departs. Again, the Risen One is apparently not easily recognized:

His recognition by others would appear to be either the work of His will, or (what is perhaps only another aspect of the same thing) the result of spiritual affinity and love on the part of His friends. And yet again, the old relationships are not resumed. The Risen One is an occasional visitant, not an abiding companion. He refuses the caress of affection, inviting only the touch of an inquiring faith. Yet He is no ghost: He eats before His friends if not with them. But He does not eat as guest, but as host: and as something more and higher than a human host. His affections and interests have most patently survived—He is quite obviously *the same person*: yet He is clothed upon by new functions and powers, and the final issue of it all is not so much a departure as an intimate abiding among men: “Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world.”

It is foolishness to deal with a story like this as if it were, what precisely it is not, an alleged case of return from death to what we call “life.” The *differentia* of the story from all others is that it is *a revelation of a new type and kind of life*: a life human in its interests and affinities, yet superhuman in its powers and issue. Here is a “new fact, added to the sum of human experience”: a “new creation”: a revelation of the possibilities of human life.

And what lifts the story out of the reach of

scorn and compels our reverence is the moral interest which pervades it. Here is no pandering to lawless curiosity regarding the unseen: no pretentious apocalypse of the heavenly places: but the complete life speaking to the incomplete in accents educative, encouraging, empowering, fulfilling. To make this plain, typical instances of these appearances of the Risen Christ have been selected, evidently with care, and narrated in detail. Two of the incidents, for example illustrate the distress—partly intellectual, partly moral and affectional—which had been caused by the death of Jesus Himself. The perplexity is not simply dismissed by His appearance, but removed by means which even now appeal to us as reasonable, and replaced by a positive education in religious faith. Other incidents illustrate the truth that love is the gateway to spiritual revelations, and the supreme condition of spiritual growth. The narrative as a whole, that is to say, forms a real addition to religious knowledge, is a storehouse of significant spiritual suggestion, and is worthy of its place at the climax of a career of extraordinary religious brilliance and originality.

And there can be no kind of doubt that the story has had a revolutionary effect upon human thought and life. It has wrought, as we should expect a genuine discovery of a further stage in human evolution to work. Men have come, by

the faith of it, to regard death in a new way ; as an occasion of change, but not of ending : as a stage in growth, with the persistence into the new life of all that is worthy in the old : and this thought of the issue from mortal life has changed the face of the world.

What, then, are we to make of this story ? It stands alone, unparalleled in the records of even the imagination of man. Re-visitations of this earthly scene by those who have passed from us have been imagined and alleged often enough : but we look in vain throughout the world for any second story even so much as imagining a human life rising from the dead, soul and body in indissoluble union, in unbroken attachment to human interests and associations yet in new detachment from them, clothed in new powers yet preserving in all that is of the essence of personality a real identity with the past : possessing a transfigured fullness of capacity and passing into a higher order while giving its benediction and promise to those remaining in the lower—that Picture has been seen once and once only, in the resurrection of Christ. What are we to make of it ?

If Jesus be the Representative Man, His life the Divinely appointed Illustration of what man in God's idea is meant to be, then and then only

is the story seen to be in place. "We see in the Risen Christ the end for which man was made." A type of human life free from the control of space and of time, in bondage to nothing but God, is fittingly set forth by one in whose earthly career already there were visible, as we have seen, so many marks of "universality." Already, in His thirty-three years in Palestine, Jesus had manifested a new type of human life, a kind of humanity that leaped over the barriers of race, that enfolded within itself the highest ideals of the East and of the West, harmonizing and fulfilling them, and setting to all men everywhere an example that they should walk in His steps. If anywhere in history we might dare to look for a revelation of a mode of existence higher than this present and yet human, it would surely be precisely where we do find it, as the climax and consummation of the career of the "New Man," Christ Jesus. It is fitting that the One Universal Man should carry further whatever further revelation is to be given here of the possibilities of human life: fitting, that is to say, that *by Man should come the resurrection of the dead*. He who, standing alone in the middle of human history, unfolds in His own full life the possibilities of human life on earth, He is surely in "His own order" as "the first begotten from the dead": the first to rise out of the womb of earth into a higher incarnation

than this present order as yet permits. And from this point of view, alike the limitations and the extreme simplicity of the Resurrection narrative become credible and explicable. The story is a series of "first lessons" in the New Life that is before man, given and made possible by the Man Christ Jesus. It is right that "first lessons" should be short and childlike and in the main, illustrations by sample. Such are the "lessons" of Christ's resurrection life: if we become as little children, we shall understand, and enter into the Kingdom of which they tell.

XII

THE WITNESS OF PENTECOST

THE story of Jesus crowns its long series of marvels by the daring of its final statement—that He is still alive on the earth, working by spiritual means for the fulfillment of His purposes. Some six weeks after His crucifixion, we are told, a group of His friends, gathered “in one place,” became suddenly the subjects of a very violent mental and emotional upheaval, out of the turmoil of which they emerged changed men, full of joy, courage, eloquence, and an astonishingly magnanimous and generous love. They attributed the change to the action of their still living Master; and, confident that He was working with them, they set out upon a course of action which has issued in the establishment of the Christian Church and in the changing of the face of the world.

This is indeed the source of the perennial interest of this finale to the gospel story—that it links itself on to facts which we can daily see and touch; and the question of its credibility and meaning presses urgently upon us. Antecedently, one would have said that it was incredible in the highest degree—the suggestion

that Christ was still alive, and though unseen, was playing upon men's minds and affections and impulses; yet there stand the facts, especially the fact of the solid structure of new life and thought built up by the men who attributed their first impetus in the new direction to Christ's own living presence and inspiration.

I cannot but think that the idea of Christ's "universality" goes a long way to explain this story, and make it credible: that no formula comes nearer explaining the phenomena of the life of the early Christian Church than this: that these phenomena were the outcome of *the pressure of a catholic presence on provincial minds*.

From the psychological point of view, there is a perfect naturalness about the story of Pentecost. The friends of Jesus had for months, if not years, been in contact with a Being bewilderingly resourceful in power and knowledge and love; they had been witnesses of a series of events without parallel in history, in which this Being had been central, and in which He had come into conflict with the direst factors in human fate; they had seen unexampled love call out unfathomable hate; had felt the fascination of the heart blend with the puzzlement of the mind; had known the ruin of cherished hopes to be followed swiftly by a vision of ineffable glory. Is it any wonder that after the final enigma of the As-

cension following on Christ's word, "Lo, I am with you all the days," these men should spend some weeks in puzzled thought, searching for some explanation that would cover all the facts they had been confronted with during the term of their companionship with Jesus? Is it any wonder if, while the busy brains were working, each collating all the facts he knew—the reminiscence of each differing in some ways from that of his neighbour—the minds should run by converging lines to an unanimous conclusion, simultaneously reached? Is it any violation of the laws of mind that their collective "Eureka!" should long antedate their power of presenting to others in plain intelligible articulate speech the results of their tense thinking, and that at first they should need new linguistic symbols for thoughts that were so startling and so new? If once we grant that in Jesus there had confronted these Galilæan peasants a personality of extraordinary and miraculous complexity, possessing an area of sympathies and knowledge and outlook utterly unimagined in their toil-worn and limited lives—then, the silence and the waiting of the "Rogation" days, the common prayer, the "one accord," the moment of collective discovery, the sudden roar of the wild wind of thought released, the intellects aflame, the rushing into activity of unsuspected powers of utterance—these things surely become intelligible and credible enough;

and, indeed, without them the story of Jesus had been an inexplicable and tantalizing torso.

What, then, was it that these men had found on Pentecost to be the secret and explanation of Jesus? It is here that the thought of "universality" creeps up before the mind. We read that when "the multitudes came together they were confounded because that every man heard the disciples of Jesus speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying, one to another, Behold are not all these which speak Galilæans (*i.e.*, provincial of the provincial)? How hear we every man in our own tongue?" That is to say, "Whence this universality of appeal?" For, however we may figure to ourselves the details of the occurrences of Pentecost, it is clear that the appeal of Christ was carried home to men of differing nations by some utterances that *drew their hearts together as one*, as we can fancy hearts drawn together by the universal language of love. By some divine possession these Galilæan fishermen were carried out of themselves, out of their local interests and national and sectarian narrowness, and—long before their intellects could judge and approve the novelty—were compelled to stretch out the arms of love to all mankind in the name of the catholic Jesus, and pour forth in unaccustomed strains, intelligible enough to responsive hearts, but meaningless to the loveless, the adoration of the

majesty of Jesus and the love He bore the world. I own that no thought helps me, as this does, to believe and thankfully to rejoice in Pentecost. When I read St. Peter's defense of the new enthusiasm I understand the point of that defense to be that a new era has dawned in which religious and moral enthusiasm can no longer be the monopoly of the few, in which spiritual gifts will know no barriers of age and rank and nation, and in which God will be very directly and impartially accessible to every human soul. In other words, St. Peter proclaims the closing of the era of limitations in religion, and announces the era of catholicity. It is surely a touch of inimitable truthfulness in the story that this same Peter, when the turmoil of the emotions of Pentecost had passed, should only with difficulty and amid misgivings and lapses be able to realize in the actualities of daily conduct this ideal of catholicity. But amid the fervours of the first Whitsunday, the conception of a frontierless kingdom of God, of a world-wide salvation, of a new international community based on the fact and reception of a universal redemption was forced forth from the apostolic mind, and proclaimed without reserve. "The promise is unto you and to your children and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

And when we ask what sort of a community in point of fact gathered itself around this

preaching, again it is the traces of the dominance of some universalistic idea that are the most clearly discernible. A primitive and simple communism witnessed to the nascent instinct of the infinite expansibleness of the new community—for grades and rank stand on the idea of a limited and frontier-bound base: women were freely admitted into fellowship in prayer and service, a far-reaching religious revolution being thus silently introduced, obviously under the influence of some idea or person transcending the sex-division: distinctions of nationality tended to lose themselves, and were shown by the master mind of Paul to have been obliterated on the side of privilege and to survive only on the side of function: and the religious worship of the new community, while never disowning its antecedents in temple and synagogue, was from the first free, detached from locality, portable, adaptable, potentially universal.

In all this there is the working of one influence, one central idea: that that which had come to men in Christ Jesus had come *for all men*, and was available for all. It was the function of St. Paul to draw out in manifold detail the implicates of this central idea; and as we now, reading his writings, try to trace the growth of his mind, it becomes evident that the more he saw of the working of Christianity in the world, the more he came under the influence

of the "universalistic" idea of a *réconciliation*, a gathering together of all things into one. And this he, in common with the whole apostolic community, traced to the activity, undiminished by death, of Christ in the world—of the Christ in whom the "universalistic idea" was incarnate—in whom, as Paul said, there was "neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free"; nay, in whom—to use his most daring word of all—"it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell" the "fullness of the Godhead in bodily form." This is the witness of Pentecost—of the new era of the Spirit, of the minds most deeply influenced by that new era, and of the great Church they founded—to the Universality of Jesus. That in the literature of the apostolic Church this idea is dominant and ubiquitous is the best of all proofs that it is worth our while to emphasize the idea of Universality sometimes, as we have sought to do in these studies, when we contemplate Jesus our Lord.

We believe that this Catholic Christ is by His living Spirit moving still in the hearts of men for the fulfillment of the designs of God. It is true the spirit of provincialism dies hard: in political life, where men are so slow to realize that the catholicity of Jesus has altered the content of the idea of patriotism, and is the herald and regulator of a larger and more cos-

mopolitan ideal than that of the older nationalism: in ecclesiastical life, where, to the infinite saddening of many hearts, pride and the fear of man are raising barriers where the catholic Christ would fain destroy them: in our moral life, where a kindly and hospitable goodwill struggles with the bitterness and selfishness of narrow sympathies. And yet the Catholic Christ must triumph; and for His triumph we must work and watch and pray—not without suffering, for he who, declining the rôle of proselytizer, sectary, partisan, and works for the larger unity that is to be, must endure the frequent reproaches of the belligerent brother who lives for the victories of the hour, and the success of his particular party. But just here is the “patience of the saints”; they who have seen the vision of the Universal Jesus will wait and work and pray, even though around them are the thickets and stockades of a militant sectarianism and though the air is full of the obscene riots of party cries—striving in all they do to contribute to the fulfillment of their High Priest’s prayer for a truly catholic unity corresponding to the Universality of His Person, when there shall be, the whole world over, but one flock, and one Shepherd.

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